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LIFE AND ADVENTURES

OF

COUNT BEUGNOT.

VOL. II.

LIFE AND ADVENTURES

OF

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COUNT BEUGNOT,

Minister of State under Napoleon I.

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EDITED FROM THE FRENCH

BY

CHARLOTTE M. YONGE,

AUTHOR OF "THE HEIR OF REDCLYFFE," ETC.

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LIFE AND ADVENTURES

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CHAPTER I.

My return to Paris—General Anxiety in the Metropolis—The French Army—Visit to the Monuments of Paris—Preparations for the Russian Expedition—Despotic Act—Dine with the Emperor at the Elysée—Politics of the Archbishop of Malines—Return to Düsseldorf—Opinions respecting the Russian Expedition—Alarming Phenomenon—The Emperor at Wilna—Presentiment of the Disasters of the Russian Campaign.

I DESIRED to enter this year upon the enjoyment of the permission the Emperor had given me to carry my budget to Paris, and take a share of the discussion of it in his presence. After employing the month of November in preparation, and so arranging that I might not be caught unprepared on any point by the Emperor, I set forth for the capital. It was three years since I had been there, and I found its appearance much changed. As long as Josephine had shared the throne, her presence had been enough to preserve the remembrance of the previous period, that is to say, of an elegant equality. Many of us had known the graceful widow of Alexandre Beauharnais, and Napoleon had never succeeded in changing her, in spite of his attempts—even by putting a crown on her head. The arrival of Marie Louise in her place had been the signal of the change that had struck me. It seemed as if the Austrian

haughtiness had succeeded to French elegance. The princess was young, shy, timid; and the effect was like pride. The Emperor lived more in private than before; and the new Empress had the honour or the blame of this. Yet the court had multiplied in officers, in chamberlains, in ladies of honour, in equerries; a luxury, hitherto unknown, was exhibited on all sides; but tedium had made its way there along with magnificence. Men went to the Tuileries out of duty or interest: there was now no place for those who went from choice or affection.

The marshals and chiefs of administrations, whose fortunes the Emperor had made, possessed splendidly furnished mansions; and though their endowments were sufficient to render their fortunes secure, they were uneasy, and did not make any great demonstrations; the possessors of such wealth could neither enjoy it themselves, nor afford the enjoyment of it to others. It is quite right that nobility should be enhanced by time, for no one ever becomes a gentleman in a single generation; but these spoilt children of the Revolution thought it necessary to strut about amid their marbles and bronzes, in imitation of the grands seigneurs of past days, but they gained nothing except the expense and weariness.

The Emperor and his ministers kept sumptuously served tables, surrounded with servants bedizened with gold; but there was a weight of dulness on all these ceremonies. I nowhere met with the cordiality that, six years before, when I came up to the Council of State, collected at unpretending dinners and homely feasts the soldiers of the Great Captain and the learned authors of his Codes. The interval that parted us from our cradle was too short: we had not had time to be sophisticated.

At the time I reached Paris, all minds were a prey to

the anxiety inseparable from great suspense; all eyes could perceive the preparation of an immense expedition, but on what quarter of the globe would the storm burst? A recent alliance united the House of Austria with that of Napoleon; the peace of Tilsit had thrust back Prussia into the rank of a second-rate power, and she was hardly strong enough to remain even there. Russia was left; but there was no knowledge of any grave dispute between the two powers. The Russian ambassador protested on every occasion that his sovereign was most desirous to remain at peace with France, and, on our side, not one word escaped prophetic of a war with Russia. When an attempt was made to derive a hint from any one connected with the Government, all the answer that could be obtained was that the expedition was destined to set the last seal to the Emperor's glory. However, no one durst doubt or fear, so deeply implanted was the dogma of imperial infallibility. There was only one cry—for the details of the expedition; only one anxiety—the fear of being left out. The Prince of Benevento envied the lot of the Archbishop of Malines, who had just been appointed ambassador-extraordinary to Warsaw; and one of the oldest generals of division, Mathieu Dumas, thought himself honoured by being named controller-general of the army.

I still had in my mind remembrances of Essling. I had also heard German generals say that our army was no longer that of Austerlitz or Jena, and that at the battle of Wagram our safety had only been due to a disproportionately large artillery; besides, abroad such perfect faith in the Emperor's genius was not professed as in France. So I dared to hazard, not assuredly the least censure, but some slight doubt on the marvels expected without being very clearly defined. I was re-

buffed on all sides,—sometimes, no doubt, by that fear of the Lord which was then, as much as ever, the beginning of wisdom, but really much oftener by the hallucination by which all minds were possessed.

I presented myself at the levée; the Emperor seemed surprised at my presence. I reminded him of the permission he had given me to come to Paris to bring my budget. He made a sign of approval, and told me he would appoint a day for the discussion. He passed abruptly to details of the military force of the grand-duchy. He thought it possible it might be increased, and insisted on the speedy organisation of a second regiment of chasseurs, which he would make part of his guard. He asked if we still kept our handsome white coats. I replied that the army would keep them as long as the Emperor had not given any directions otherwise. "Well, keep them, as you like them," said the Emperor; "but they get very dirty in campaigning. Await my orders here. Is all quiet in the grand-duchy?"

"Perfectly quiet, or I should not be here."

"Very well."

I let the first week go by in visits to my friends, and getting freshly bathed in the waters of the capital. Nothing very particular happened to me but an invitation to dinner from the Grand Marshal, in the splendid room at the Tuileries. The dinner was one of the finest I ever remember. The guests, whether intentionally or in the natural course of things, were nearly all princes or nobles from Germany, neighbours of the grand-duchy, with whom I had been in daily communication on business, and even at times in society. I thought I observed that the places at table were arranged according to the order these princes preserved among themselves, and could hardly understand why the Grand Marshal had put the Prince of Bavaria on his right, and me on his left.

This should have been the place of the Grand Duke of Berg; but I was only his servant, and not even his representative. However that might be, one always gets on well when the dinner is excellent, and I got on especially well at this. I also indulged the hope that my presence, as well as the distinguished position I occupied, would remarkably increase my credit beyond the Rhine.

I visited the art-collections, the public establishments, the imperial residences; and I found that these monuments of our glory were some in progress, others almost completely restored. I was especially struck by the works begun at Versailles and Fontainebleau, and nearly finished at the Louvre; but, even in the midst of this grand change, I felt something that resembled disgust at seeing that so many noble efforts of literature and art all tended solely to the glory of one man. There was rivalry as to who should most easily make the glories of old pale before his radiance,—who should most quickly erase the monograms of Francis I. and Louis XIV., and substitute the perpetual monogram of Napoleon. I had been away for three years, and when I left Paris the Emperor still retained some moderation in the exercise of his power; he still begged M. de Fontanes to preserve to us at least the republic of letters. So I had carried tolerably liberal ideas into Germany with me, and could not have supposed that the Emperor should have become such a stranger to them. I had preserved these ideas; for they were my own, and besides somewhat to the taste of the part of Germany I was sent to. At Paris I was continually astonished by meeting despotism everywhere, even in details that proved that the Emperor must have perfect confidence in the patience of the French as he had fashioned them. This explained the astonishment of M. Rœderer on his first

visit, when he could not imagine how people should speak so freely of the Emperor, and should, while praising such of his acts as were worthy of it, allow themselves to censure others. Now I saw that my saloon at Düsseldorf was not at all in the order of the day.

The only person to whom I communicated my reflections was M. Regnauld de Saint-Jean d'Angely, who made some similar ones on his own account. I said to him, "What is the meaning of this great expedition of the Emperor?" Regnauld answered me, "He is going to Russia: the notion has been more than a year in his head. The state of affairs in the Peninsula torments him from morning to night; it is the gnawing worm. He wants to strike a great blow, and bring the North to his feet; he has a fancy that he will so bring England to a compromise, and will have done at once with her, Spain, and Portugal. At least, this is the inference I gather from some words that I put together, and certain measures that I see him take one after the other; for we are all in a state of conjecture, and since Maret has been appointed Minister for Foreign Affairs, he will not talk politics to any one,—not even to him, though he did so before. There, I only tell you what I gather from calculation, and I may be wrong. Is it the perpetual rage for heaping conquest on conquest?—to make them by war?—to go on making them by peace? Does France, from Rome to Hamburg, seem still too narrow for him? I cannot believe in that sort of madness, which will end by being his ruin and ours." When I used to tell Regnauld that the Emperor was stretching the rope very tight, he cried out, "And to whom are you saying this?" He told me that he had by a decree been constituted a member of a commission, or committee, or consultation,—in a word, a meeting of men

that had no name, because there was no precedent for it; and yet they had to try General Dupont, under some form or other, for his unhappy capitulation at Baylen. Regnauld was interested in this general, an amiable man, whose first start in life had been brilliant; but he thought he had done wrong, and his guilt was daily aggravated by the continuance of the war in Spain. Dupont only asked for a fair trial and the means of defence, and this the Emperor harshly refused, in spite of everything that could be said to him, trying General Dupont himself, and sentencing him to be deprived of his military rank and decorations, and condemned to imprisonment for life. The sentence appeared during my stay in Paris; it removed all uncertainty, demolished all hope, and plainly showed what kind of government we had come to. Still, having been led on from a smaller act of despotism to a larger, until this, the worst of all, men's minds were but slightly affected by it. There were even some sophists to be found who declared that the capitulation of Baylen was entirely political, and of such importance to the fate of the country that there would have been danger in bringing it before any kind of tribunal, and that the Emperor had adopted the only way of examining and judging such a business, by collecting at the Tuileries men of most consideration in the state and in the army, to perform, in the first place, the functions of a court of inquiry there, then of a chamber of discussion, and, lastly, each privately to give his opinion to the Emperor of what ought to be done, when the Emperor should himself make a decree in the plentitude of his power; and the greater this power, it was said, the better was the security for the impartiality of him who exercised it!

A few days later I was admitted to dinner with the Emperor at the Elysée. I shared this honour with

three of my colleagues in the Council of State, Regnauld, Molé, and Corvetto, and with the senators Laplace and Monge. Amid the general constraint the Emperor's brow was free from all care, and he showed himself merry on several topics of conversation. Then he discussed the affair of General Dupont. He paid some tribute of regret to the fate of this unhappy general, of whom he had expected something quite different; but he spoke hotly upon the question whether a general should ever capitulate in the open country, and gave his opinion strongly in the negative. He showed that the contrary system would every moment endanger the fate of a country at war with its neighbour. Proofs, more convincing each than the former, flowed rapidly from his lips: he insisted that if the idea of capitulation in the open country had ever been admissible, there would have been rules, as in the case of fortified places, when, how, and on what conditions a general might be allowed to capitulate; but that nothing of the sort was to be found in the laws of war, or even in its history, ancient or modern, the reason being that such a capitulation could not be imagined for very shame. "What," he proceeded, "ought a general to do when his army is in a doubtful or bad position? Alter it, if he can; if he cannot, make a call upon his courage, and fight, and keep on fighting, for there is a chance. But he may be beaten. Well, all is not lost even then. Honour will be left. It is Saint Louis in Egypt, King John at Poitiers, Francis the First at Pavia. They were not dishonoured by being made prisoners on the field of battle. No; that was their proud side, for they had the pikes in their sides, and the swords at their throats, having done all that brave soldiers could do. In a nation where there are such examples, Baylen is a stain that must be effaced, at least as far as we can."

The Emperor passed from this grave subject to his Council of State, and gave it some well-deserved praise. He said that he had made a mistake when at the beginning he had been desirous of making his Councillors of State a kind of courtiers. Their dress, which was very suitable at that time, when it was necessary to give a shock to the universal cynicism, even in clothes, now erred in want of character and gravity. Hence he was led to speak of the wives of the Councillors of State. He complained that they were an ugly lot, and, addressing M. Molé, asked him if his own was an exception. M. Molé replied, with the dignity that never forsook him, that it would be hard to answer the Emperor's question, because a husband is a bad judge of his wife's beauty. Then came the turn of the Senate, not as to the beauty of their ladies—at their age it would have been an insult to mention it; but the Emperor complained that if he summoned any one into the Senate, he was no better on the morrow of his appointment than on the eve, and could not understand what was becoming to this new condition. He mentioned some names that justified the reproach. The Emperor concluded his lively and animated conversation by an apologue containing a snare for M. de Laplace, into which the celebrated author of the *Traité de Mécanique Céleste* fell in the most simple manner. One would have laughed at it, were not the little mistakes of great men to be respected up to a certain point. There was nothing about the Emperor that day that could show a head absorbed in the meditation of an immense enterprise.

I remained at Paris till I was summoned to the discussion of the budget of the grand-duchy. I heard it said on all sides that the Emperor was immediately to start—that he was going at the end of the week—that he would depart in three days, perhaps to-morrow; but I was not much concerned about these

reports of his departure, because I was confident that he would not go without having settled my budget. Capital security, indeed! But what man, however small his place may be, does not exaggerate his importance to himself, and that to perfect folly?

However, during my stay in Paris I went to dine with General Mathieu Dumas, Comptroller-General of the Grand Army, which was assembling from all quarters. The conversation turned the whole dinner-time on the immediate departure. All the guests, excepting myself, were men prepared to take the highest posts in the great expedition, and at their head was the Archbishop of Malines. This prelate began by telling us that the object of the expedition was a secret, only confided by the Emperor to those who were going to be employed in the highest posts; and that of course they ought to keep it to themselves. He soon betrayed himself, however, by speaking of his embassy to Warsaw. According to him, this mission had become, what it was before, the most important in diplomacy. So it was only entrusted to men of the first class, to the Cardinal de Polignac, Belle-Isle, De Broglie, and De Vergennes. Monseigneur, smiling softly, and dropping his eyes on the cross that adorned his breast, then seemed to say to the spectators, "Add me to the list." According to the prelate, the disturbances that had afflicted Europe for sixty years—including the French Revolution—had their whole origin in the first partition of Poland; and the only way of putting an end to them, and of procuring a durable peace among the States, was to restore matters in Poland to their state previous to 1771; and, Monseigneur added, with imperturbable coolness, "I will see to that." Then, as if he had desired that we should not dwell too much on this last remark, he drew an animated picture of the accessories to his embassy, in secretaries, carriages, and

cooks: he would not be contented with regenerating Poland, but would steep it in admiration. The incomparable prelate's eloquence amused me in common with all the world; but I perceived through all this amusement that the Emperor really meant to go. I begged General Dumas to tell me privately what he knew about it; and he told me that it was possible that the Emperor might start that very day, and certainly would not wait three days. I thought it quite useless to show him my face again, and press him to give some hours to the business that had brought me to Paris. Besides, the Emperor might consider such conduct as importunity. I resolved, therefore, to let matters take their course as the Emperor pleased, and to stay a fortnight longer in Paris before I went back to the Grand-duchy of Berg.

I then had cause to observe that there was a sensible difference in the mood and manner of men in office when the Emperor was settled at Paris or on a distant journey. If he was at Paris, everyone was on the *qui vive*, expecting from one moment to the other to be summoned to a privy council, to an administrative council, or to a simple conference. One feared that he had said too much; another, that he had not done enough. The master's countenance was examined with anxiety: his least words might bring ruin; and at any appearance of care on his face, a serious, nay, even saddened expression was repeated on those of others. When the Emperor was at a distance, these same countenances expanded. Some leisure was resumed beneath the paternal government of the Arch-Chancellor;—one went to the play, into the country, and took part in general enjoyment. If it were allowed to venture such a comparison in a lofty matter, I should say that all of us, such as we were, did not a little resemble a set of school-boys, very dismal beneath their master's ferule,

and resuming their mirth the moment his back was turned.

People now began to talk more of the great expedition. There was no doubt of its being directed against Russia, but a hope was still kept up that when the Emperor was in the North an arrangement might be made. No matter of importance could be seen in dispute between France and Russia, and especially none that could furnish a motive on the part of the former for a display of military force out of all proportion. The very vastness of these forces made men more easy as to their employment. It was supposed that the Emperor had only put them on foot to present an imposing front to Russia, and render her more complaisant on certain points evidently in dispute, such as the article of licenses and the union of the Duchy of Oldenburg.

Balls had begun after the Emperor's departure, parties were more frequent, and everyone, with or without perceiving that it was so, celebrated in his own way his master's absence. I wished to have a share in this holiday, and was not in much haste to return to the grand-duchy. The Arch-Chancellor aroused me from this sort of slumber. He showed some surprise, one day, at seeing me still in Paris, and added, "You know that when the Emperor is with his army, he expects that every one should be at his post, and yours is at Düsseldorf." I begged his highness to consider that I had received no order to return. "Very good; but the Emperor's departure is equivalent to the most positive order: take care that this lengthened stay does not do you harm. Who can answer for it that, unintentionally and unwittingly, you may not meet with some adventure here that may give occasion to a police report? This report might come to head-quarters at a moment when the Emperor was out of sorts, and would gain you at

least a sharp reprimand." I considered this as very sensible advice, and in three days was on my journey.

A Frenchman is uneasy one day, is comforted the next,—is now in despair, and now in ecstasy. The German is quite different. He is more slow to receive an impression, but he retains it; he digests and renders it the occupation and at times the torment of his life. All the countries beyond the Rhine had their eyes fixed on the famous expedition. They considered it a Salic event, the issue of which would be the deliverance or subjection of Germany. Count Nesselrode believed me in the secret of the Emperor's policy, because I came back from Paris and had more than once conferred with his majesty; and he entertained me freely with what he himself knew. I saw that he was better informed than I was, and that by a good deal. He told me that no one had any more doubts; that Russia had exhausted all the means of conciliation becoming in a great, self-respecting power, and none had been successful. So she expected to be attacked, and that the Emperor Napoleon would employ his whole force to strike her in the heart at St. Petersburg, or even at Moscow. The Emperor Alexander irrevocably decided to yield in nothing to his redoubtable adversary, to let him penetrate into Russia, and to await him there.

I saw by the reports that I received from all sides, from the banks of the Neva to those of the Rhine, that men whose opinion was of weight in business, or those whose knowledge gave them weight, considered an expedition to Russia very hazardous; and they gave reasons thoroughly convincing to my mind. I gathered from these reports what I thought likely to strike the Emperor, composed a memorial and addressed it to the then Secretary of State, M. Daru. I thought he would be bolder than the Duke of Bassano in laying before the

Emperor's eyes any production adverse to his views. I do not know what became of my memorial, or whether Daru was really more resolute than his predecessor; but what is quite certain is, that neither the Emperor nor his minister ever said a word to me about it, and very likely, on a point of official etiquette, he may have thrown it on the table as the impertinent work of a man meddling with what did not concern him. And very likely it was the best thing that could have happened for me; for some time afterwards my poor colleague, Malouet, was dismissed from the Council of State and banished, for having addressed to the Emperor some salutary remonstrances, in which might be traced the enlightened statesman and the courageous servant. And yet now, when I read over the excellent pages of M. Malouet, and likewise my own, which were not worth near so much, they almost seem written after the events, as if, in their advance they had shed around them light for all the world, except for him against whom it had been written that he should not see what was to come till after it had appeared in all its terrible reality.

I persisted in founding some hopes on the Emperor's prolonged stay in Dresden, and the kind of congress of kings and princes he had collected there. I could not believe that so many great personages should have come expressly to the capital of Saxony only to garnish the feasts that the Emperor held there. Shall I avow it to my shame?—every morning I read over the memorial I had addressed to him; and I was not very far from the utmost bounds of folly, that is to say, of believing that it had made an impression. Never in the world had infatuation been driven to such a length! I have ever since in my innermost judgment respected the pretensions, however absurd, of anyone who sets up for a writer, however foolish. I say to myself, I was worse

than that. However, I received a letter from the Minister of Foreign Affairs to inform me that the Emperor had gone to take the command of his army. Two commands were given to me, namely, to give a greatly increased attention to the administration of the grand-duchy, and to hasten the march of the troops which were intended to form a portion of the Grand Army. Warsaw was mentioned as their destination. In my condition of mind I greedily seized on anything that could avert the idea of an expedition to Russia. The destination of the troops of the grand-duchy was sufficient to inspire me with the fancy that nothing more than a war in Poland was contemplated, and that the Emperor's armies would not pass the boundaries of this ancient kingdom, whose restoration was in question. The policy of the Archbishop of Malines recurred to my mind, and I regretted that I had somewhat laughed at his confidence. In this way I formed to myself a kind of system of security, which I was determined to abandon only at the last extremity.

At last it became necessary to give it up, when the Emperor's forces passed the boundary of Russia, after their easy occupation of Poland; but I had been warned of this great event by a phenomenon that appeared to have been sent to presage a fearful disaster, and at the same time give a foretaste of it. The day that the army set foot on the Russian territory was my reception-day, and I generally had from twenty to five-and-twenty persons to dine with me. The dining-room of the hunting-palace, where I was then living, looked towards the Rhine, and on that side was lighted by four large windows. As we went in to dinner from the drawing-room, the guests were so struck by the terrible threatenings of a storm that was gathering on the Rhine, that no one durst take his place at table, and all returned to the drawing-room. A deep copper-coloured cloud, shaded

in parts almost to a blood-red hue, was coursing along the right side of the Rhine, and endeavouring to cross the river and burst on the left bank, but was drifted back by a violent wind. The conflict lasted more than half an hour, and all the time the mass of clouds kept on increasing. The air was rent with sharp hissing blasts rushing from each side, as violent as those that accompany a storm at sea. It seemed as though the Rhine were a barrier that the storm could not pass. At last it did cross, and broke in fury on the grand-duchy. From my point of view I could see the lightning fall, and striking again and again both to the right and left. A shower of hail, of which several stones were more than six inches in circumference, soon covered the ground. All the fruits of the earth that encountered this terrible scourge were swept away. Houses were overthrown; ancient trees fared no better; horses and men were killed. The oldest men in the country averred that nothing so frightful had ever occurred in their remembrance. The forest of Duisbourg, the place of the wild breeding-stud, was overthrown and almost entirely destroyed. I went thither that same evening, and found a scene of desolation that gave me some idea of what the world would appear to the gaze of the last man.

I have my share of superstition, like other people, whether avowed or denied; and when subsequently, by comparison of dates, I was certain that the storm had burst on the grand-duchy on the very day and hour that the Emperor entered Russia, I was perfectly persuaded that the great expedition would be nothing but an immense disaster, and I regulated my conduct by my belief. So I did not care to conclude the feudal recovery of the county of Walmoden, which the Emperor had granted to me as an hereditary estate. The purchaser had to be repaid a sum of sixteen thousand pounds, after which I

should have received from his hands, to appropriate to myself, an estate with a splendid title attached to it, for which I cared very little, but producing a rent of some two thousand a year, for which I cared a great deal more. My family and friends pressed me in vain. My money was ready and the documents prepared. Such an impression had the storm made on me that I could not arrange a step further. Then my old woman's belief was of some use to me! If I had received the estate of Walmoden I should hardly have had time to take possession of it. Not but that the actual holder, the Count de Merfeld, was a man of high honour, and I could not have any suspicion that he would keep my money and resume his property; but he was only nominal holder, or rather the contract of sale was nothing but a veil to conceal from the Emperor that the real possessor was the Count Walmoden, his bitter enemy. I do not dispute the uprightness of the latter any more than that of the Count de Merfeld; but his views were wider and his policy was more extensive. He might have thought it fair to punish, at least by some delay, a count of Napoleon's creation, for having ventured to stretch forth his hands to an estate that gave a seat in the Diet of the holy Roman empire, and for which George I., King of England, had given a great deal of money, as a worthy establishment in Germany for one of his natural sons.

After the Emperor's entrance into Russia, the only news I received from head-quarters, and that at long intervals, was about military business. We attended as best we could, M. Rœderer and I, to the orders that had been given to both of us to give all our attention to the grand-duchy. The time for disputes and ill turns was over, perhaps because the roughness of M. Rœderer's character had been polished off; perhaps because we

both thought for ourselves, without daring to say it, that the moment when our existence was in the realms of chance would be ill chosen for a dispute about precedence. It was understood that we could expect very little from the Emperor. We saw that he still dated some decrees from Moscow; but we also saw that such matters had been selected as their subject as were especially calculated to cast dust in our eyes. In a word, if it was to be believed that amid the flames of Moscow the Emperor had power and time to take thought for the administration of France, there might be doubts whether he had any remaining for that little portion of his empire called the grand-duchy of Berg.

We occupied ourselves in perfecting the institutions already given to the grand-duchy, and in preparing those that were needed. The administration had acquired a regular form, and daily increased in favour in the country. Thus, during the year 1812, all was perfectly quiet. I prepared a quarterly account of the condition of the diverse manufactures, as exact as possible. They were making evident progress, a fact attributable to the introduction of their produce into the kingdom of Italy, and to some privileges at the fair of Leipsic granted them by the Emperor. Numerous fresh lands brought into cultivation, the better distribution of crops, and the more abundant harvests that were the consequence, bore witness to the progress of agriculture. So when the news of the great disaster arrived, after bulletins that up to that time had spoken of nothing but victories, it was doubtless received with joy by the higher classes of society, but this joy was not partaken by the most numerous class, who felt grief and showed it plainly. Their good time was very nearly over, but not yet entirely so. The news surprised me but little. I was prepared by all I had heard

said from the beginning of this unhappy war, and by the presage that I have just described.

I was one of the first to be informed by a spectator of the Emperor's passing through Wilna, and of his strange speeches in that town. "A month ago I was master of the North; now I am no such thing. From the sublime to the ridiculous there is but a step." Comparing this speech with another which he made to his army, on returning from Saint Jean d'Acre, and which General Damas reported to me, it can be seen that reverses never found the Emperor prepared. He seemed to imagine himself exempted from the universal lot, and thus wasted in irritation against misfortune the time and means that he ought to have employed in contending with it. No warrior, perhaps, knew better than he did how to prepare for victory, nor less how to repair defeat. In Cæsar's place he would have been killed in the battle of Munda and would not have made his escape from Alexandria. The Roman dictator was superior to the Emperor of the French in coolness in the midst of extreme danger, and in intrepidity in wrestling hand to hand against Fortune when she desired to quit him. Everyone was aware that Cæsar never despaired, and so everyone about him was hopeful.

The rest of the year 1812 passed over the grand-duchy without presenting any remarkable incident. Influential persons in Germany no longer doubted that she would be delivered, but did not yet extend their hopes further than that they might see the Emperor withdraw his troops, and give up the occupation of Hamburg and the coast. It was in the earlier months of the next year, after the Prussian army had been the first to give the signal of defection, that oaths were everywhere taken to raise ancient Germany from its ruins, and throw back the French beyond the Rhine.

The movement was general through all the states, among all ages and all ranks. The grand-duchy was no doubt the state where it was the least perceptible, and yet I could not help remarking it even there, especially in the departments which had been detached from the Prussian kingdom.

At the beginning of the campaign, the Emperor had been still able to obtain victory in the fields of Lützen and Bautzen. I had received a hint to make a great noise about these two victories; I did not fail to do so, but mystifications in politics were out of date. On every face I could read the answer that they did not yet dare to give me by word of mouth, "We do not believe any longer." It was known that these victories had been costly, and that the temper of the army was changed. The old officers, of all ranks, were weary of battles, and inquired if the Emperor was determined not to let them die out of harness; the young conscripts that arrived from the interior of France thought themselves lost when they heard the veterans despair, and a startling number of them had each sacrificed a forefinger in order to get invalided. They rendered each other this melancholy service of mutilation, a subject of much anxiety and alarm to the Emperor; and so prevalent was it that a general order was required to check it, by which, among other remedies, those who bore the marks of the offence were condemned to the baggage-service for a longer time than they would have spent in their regiment. Poor cure for so deep an ill! The war had lasted twenty years. We had had twenty years of its dangers, victories, disasters, and triumphs,—time had worked out its cycle unnoticed by us. Three years earlier I had met the bravest of the brave, Marshal de Montebello,* about to join the

* Lannes.

grand army on the Danube. We were thronging round the warrior, with wishes for his speedy return, and foretelling fresh laurels without any fears of being false prophets. "I do not know," replied the Marshal, "whether I shall come back; but of this I am sure, that, even if I do, it will be only to set off again. It is the Emperor's destiny never to stop, and mine to follow him to the last, and, sooner or later, we shall perish one after another! If we were but bachelors!"

We vied with one another in putting more cheerful thoughts before the Marshal, but in vain; he could not help grieving for his wife, and for his four sons, as if he already had presaged that he was never to see them again. His death-bed conversation with the Emperor has been narrated in different ways, but it is certain that, with all the authority of a dying friend, he severely rebuked his master for his ambition, and the disasters it was yet to occasion.

CHAPTER II.

The Emperor at Mayence—New Levies of Austria and Bavaria—Writing to the Emperor's Dictation—Affair of the Town of Hanau—M. Jean-Bon St.-André—A Promenade on the Rhine—Dinner with the Emperor and Empress—Defection of Bavaria, and Equivocal Dispositions of Austria—Interview with the Emperor—Crusade against Napoleon—Administration of the Grand-duchy—Defeat of French Generals—Seizure of English Merchandise—Monopoly of Tobacco—Count de Bentheim.

I AM inclined to believe that after the first battles of Lützen and Bautzen, the Emperor would willingly have profited by the ensuing armistice to enter on negotiations. He went to Mayence with a not very numerous suite, and summoned the Empress thither. I was also ordered to proceed thither from Düsseldorf. I found the Emperor's mind as resolute and alert as ever; but he no longer conversed so unreservedly, and evidently thought he had a part to act. The first day, he vaunted the full force of all his armies; and whenever he uttered some assertion, the effect of which on my credulity he dreaded, he looked full at me, to read in my demeanour how I was struck by it. Thus, when he told me that the King of Denmark was furnishing him with 40,000 horses, with which he should have the most formidable cavalry in Europe, some gesture of impatience must have escaped me in spite of myself, giving him reason to think I had no great trust in his formidable cavalry. He was angry. "You are," he said, "one of those pedants who always decide wrong. You repeat, after Frederick, that it takes seven years to make a trooper, and I say that cavalry regiments can

be made as fast as any other. Men are put on horseback, and there they sit; that is the whole secret! Look at my guards of honour; there is nothing like those young men for intelligence and intrepidity. They are an admirable cavalry. Have they taken seven years to form?"

The conversation turned upon the new levies ordered by Austria and Bavaria. I allowed myself to remark that they were very strong, and expressed some doubts respecting the policy of these two powers. The Emperor put aside my doubts, but without their causing him the smallest anger. I only judged by the train of his ideas, and his readiness in expressing them, that he had already thought over the matter, and was only repeating to me what he had said more than once to himself.

"I do not know," he added, "against whom these powers, and especially Austria, have a grievance to occasion these levies of men to such an unreasonable extent. There is no limit to such things, and if I were to do the same there would be none but women left in Europe to cultivate the land. I have an army as good as ever it was, of more than 400,000 men. That is enough to restore my influence again in the North. I shall not think of doubling it, though nothing could be easier."

I acquiesced, and gave all the signs of acquiescence the Emperor could desire. When he thought he had securely placed me on the ground he meant me to take up, he asked me information about the grand-duchy. I gave it him, somewhat dissembling the weak points, in other respects adhering tolerably to the facts.

"I am not pleased with your soldiers. You spend a great deal of money on their equipment, and they desert from morning to night."

I begged the Emperor to observe that the men from the grand-duchy who deserted were not soldiers, but

peasants who had been forwarded to head-quarters three days after their arrival at Düsseldorf.

"You are always saying the same thing over again! Look at the guards of honour!".

"Sire, I was wrong, and I beg your Majesty's pardon. but you cannot make any comparison between the flower of the youth of France fighting beside you, and these German clowns who are only soldiers in dress."

"We will speak more at length of that. Come to-morrow at ten."

Next day the Emperor again brought forward the affairs of the grand-duchy. He gave up the notion of the second regiment of cavalry that he had intended me to have provided; preferring to charge the duchy with the cost of a good legion of Poles who would not desert. I expressed a wish to see whether the expense would not exceed the sum allotted in the budget for raising a second cavalry regiment. At this moment the Emperor, relapsing into truth, answered me. "I must have troops, and, above all, formed soldiers. You must do it as best you can! The time for looking into things so closely is gone by." The Emperor dictated letters to me for three or four hours, and so many decrees that it took the whole night to despatch them. Striding up and down his room, he dictated very rapidly. He would hesitate a moment at the first word of a sentence; but when it was found the rest came from him in a gush. The first day I wrote to his dictation I could not keep up with him, however much I tried, and I only produced a shapeless rough copy, that I was afraid no one, not even myself, could understand. M. Fain asked me whether I really had the general plan of each letter present to my memory. I answered in the affirmative.

"If so," he said, "it is all right, and you do not want any more. It is useless to attempt to write as fast as

the Emperor speaks, or to set down on paper his very words; for he goes very rapidly and never allows any one to stop him, still less to ask him to repeat. One can but do what is possible—seize the subject of the letter, and preserve the order in which the ideas came forth. If the Emperor has employed any of the figures of speech he delights in, and which are the catch-notes of his style, do not miss them. Afterwards, when the fair copy has to be made, keep the construction of your sentences terse, and be very sparing of words. By these means you will satisfy the Emperor, who, after all, is not hard or distrustful of his secretaries, for he never revises their work."

I followed this good advice; and indeed, when I presented the letters next day for signature, the Emperor did not take the trouble to read them over; he only thought I had failed in strict etiquette by leaving too much margin blank in my fair copies. I had really left about two lines at the utmost, but that was a great deal too much, I ought not to have left anything at all. The Emperor sincerely believed that the forms peculiar to the letters of crowned heads were quite unknown to me, and that all that he had the goodness to teach me was new. I had taken care not to disturb him in this additional assumption that he took over me, while all the time I thought in myself that I had been quite up to such matters, and had been in the habit of applying my small *savoir-faire* to them, while he was still hidden in the military school, or beneath the uniform of a sub-lieutenant. On the very day in question the Emperor, when he had dictated several letters to me, and some decisions on matters relating to the grand-duchy, gave me a somewhat voluminous packet of documents upon an affair in the city of Hanau, with orders to attend to it at once, saying to me: "I have an interest in that city, and did not like to give it up when I disposed of the other possessions

of the Elector of Hesse. It is advantageously situated, and might be useful to me in more than one way. The spirit of its inhabitants is good, and I should like to do something for them. Sacrifices must not be regarded, if we are to gain the attachment of populations. I have had the pretensions of the city of Hanau examined by the Prefect of Mayence, who has done his work conscientiously, but his report is too long. Look the matter over again with him, and when you have examined it, I will put you two together in an administrative council, to settle it; but there is no time to lose; tell me to-morrow if you are ready." The words, "sacrifices to secure the attachment of populations," emboldened me to make a fresh attack on the establishment of the monopoly of tobacco in the grand-duchy. The Emperor listened to me with much patience, and I was inclined to believe that the effect of these last disasters had not been lost upon him, if he had learnt the necessity of gaining the affection of the populations. When I had expounded my views as fully as I thought fit, the Emperor replied:—

"It is extraordinary that you should not have discovered the motive that makes me persist in the establishment of the monopoly of tobacco in the grand-duchy. The question is not about your grand-duchy, but about France. I am very well aware that it is not to your benefit, and that you very possibly lose by it; but what does that signify, if it be for the good of France? I tell you, then, that in every country where there is a monopoly of tobacco, but which is contiguous to one where the sale is free, a regular smuggling infiltration must be reckoned on, supplying the consumption for twenty or twenty-five miles into the country subject to the duty. That is what I intend to preserve France from. You must protect yourselves as best you can from this infiltration. It is enough for me to have driven it back

more than five-and-twenty miles from my frontier. Now I can count upon the revenue of the right bank of the Rhine, as entirely as on that of the provinces in the midst of France. That is what I wanted. Now see if I am likely to listen to your grievances, and sacrifice the interests of France to your scruples?" I might have answered that to be right it would only have been necessary for me to transpose his proposition. I did not think of it, and was well enough satisfied with the prudent line I had taken in the second sitting.

When I left the palace, I went to find the Prefect of Mayence, to obtain his acquiescence in the Emperor's addition of myself to the board for the examination into the Hanau business. M. Jean-Bon Saint-André* was as far as possible from being annoyed, he seemed delighted, and told me there could not be too many of us to repress the extravagant notions M. Jollivet, a Councillor of State, had tried to put into the Emperor's head about the rights of the sovereign of Hanau. I had caught a sight of M. Jean-Bon Saint-André when he was occupying a seat at the Convention. He had been one of the most energetic members of the Revolutionary Government, and he was one of those men whom one might meet on business, but not on terms of intimacy. I confess I was a little disposed to regard him more favourably, on account of the work he had done about this business of Hanau. He had not only put his whole conscience into it (to make use of an expression of the Emperor's), but had treated it clearly and logically in an

* Jean-Bon, who afterwards added Saint-André to his name, was born at Montauban on the 25th of February, 1749; he died at Mayence on the 10th of December, 1813, at the age of sixty-four years. The Revolution found him Protestant minister in his native village. Elected to the Convention, he was one of the Committee of Public Safety, and in this quality was employed on different important missions to the naval forces of the Republic. Under the Directory he was appointed French consul in Algiers, and in 1802 prefect of the department of Mont-Tonnerre, which he administered till his death.

eminent degree. I complimented him, and told him I had nothing to do but to approve, and to repeat my approval in the Emperor's presence. "Take care you do no such thing," said he, "if you take any interest in the town of Hanau, or rather in the triumph of justice. The Emperor would conclude either that you have not thoroughly examined the business, or that we are playing into one another's hands, like thieves at a fair. Rather let us settle a few points of difference, that we may debate with all our might in his presence, so as to fix his attention, and to give him a chance to say to himself, and perhaps to us, 'Poor wretches that you are, what would become of you if I were not here to tell you what is right, and make you keep to it?'" I thought the advice so piquant, that I followed it. The difficulty was to find some points in the work of Jean-Bon Saint-André that I could reasonably attack, and, must it be confessed? he prepared some defects in this excellent work, in order to procure me the pleasure of pointing them out.

This M. Jean-Bon Saint-André was at first a Protestant minister, a fervent preacher, in the south of France; but who, like his fellows, had brought to the Revolution resentment to be satisfied, hatred to be slaked, and ancient party ambitions to be revived. It was seldom that a Protestant, and especially a Protestant minister, did not take his place among the most decided revolutionists. The just and tolerant Louis XVI. paid to this party the penalty of the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, of the taking of Rochelle, and of the abjuration of the head of his house.* M. Jean-Bon had come to the Convention, and displayed there extensive information, the talent for public speaking required by his original station, a rare intrepidity, and a temper equally incapable of granting or asking mercy. Above all, he was an ardent revolutionist.

* Henry IV.

He had reached the Committee of Public Safety when difficult missions, such as required an abundance of energy, fell to his lot. So, in a frightful dearth, he was sent to America, in a fleet commanded by Villaret-Joyeuse, to bring back corn at any price. The laden fleet was returning, and was just about to enter our ports, after having escaped all the watchfulness of the enemy, when an English fleet that held the channel hove in sight. There was a possibility of escape, and the admiral's counsel was to make the attempt. This seemed weak advice to Jean-Bon Saint-André, and he insisted on giving battle instantly. He spared himself less than the meanest of the sailors; and yet the result was not different from any of the other naval actions of that time. We lost some ships, and a portion of the convoy; the remainder gained our ports. It was like the fall of manna in the desert. We were consoled for the loss by what was saved, and also by the fact that our sailors performed sublime feats of bravery in this action, such as struck friends and enemies with equal admiration. Jean-Bon, when he returned to the Committee of Public Safety, followed in its bloody tracks without hesitation. He approved of all its acts, and did not afterwards disavow one of them; but his prolonged absence had in some sort set him apart, so that he escaped the vengeance that the Convention took on the other members of the famous Committee. After the 18th Brumaire, the Emperor still kept him some time out of office, but when his government was so established that persons of such ability and temper could be of service, and could not injure him, he secured St.-André's attachment by various employments, of which the last and most important was that of prefect of Mayence. In many ways he showed himself to be a model prefect. Setting aside display, any necessity for which was not pointed out to him,

and respect for certain forms, of which he had no notion, Jean-Bon left nothing to be desired. Of indefatigable industry, he was always ready to perform his functions; strictly just, and without party spirit, he fulfilled every desire of the department which had at first dreaded him. The furniture of his study consisted of a desk made of four stout pine planks, of six wooden chairs, and the lamp beneath which he often spent whole nights. The other rooms in the house were distinguished by the same modesty, and he kept a table in perfect accordance with the rest. The original member of the Committee of Public Safety reappeared in the Prefect of Mayence, with his absolute republican frugality and laboriousness.

The day arrived which had been appointed for us to discuss the Hanau business before the Emperor in the Council of Administration. Jean-Bon began his report as we had agreed. I attacked two points of it, and endeavoured to make the opinion of M. Jollivet, the Councillor of State, prevail on those points in opposition to that of the Prefect. The Emperor summed up the matter with his ordinary lucidity, and gave so much weight to my objections that I began to think there was something in them. But when he had laid down what he called strict justice, he relaxed it a little in favour of the town of Hanau, and granted it very nearly all it had asked. The same day the Prefect and I had been invited to dine with the Emperor. The Council broke up about five o'clock; and while waiting for dinner the Emperor proposed a row on the Rhine, with the view of trying a pretty little boat which the Prince of Nassau had just presented to him. We went down from the palace of the Teutonic knights to the bank of the river, where the Prince of Nassau was waiting for the Emperor.

Without having addressed a positive invitation to Jean-

Bon and myself to go with him, he had expressed himself in such a way as to authorise us to do so. We followed the company, and got into the boat with the rest. The Emperor was accompanied by two aides-de-camp and a palace adjutant. Afterwards came the Prince of Nassau and a sort of naval officer in command of the crew, Jean-Bon and myself, and lastly the Mameluke in waiting. The Emperor's suite occupied one end of the boat, we the other. The Emperor remained in the middle with the Prince of Nassau, who was showing off the magnificent vine-country that crowns the right bank of the Rhine, and has the castle of Biberich in the midst. The Emperor seemed to give his whole attention to this scene, and was examining it with a telescope. He asked for information respecting the castle of Biberich, and the Prince himself was giving it with a servile complaisance that was not to last much longer. Jean-Bon and I kept as far from the Emperor as the length of the boat allowed; but that was not enough to prevent us hearing what was said at both ends. While the Emperor, standing at one side and leaning over the water, appeared wrapped in contemplation, Jean-Bon said, and not so very low, "What a strange position! the fate of the world depends on a kick more or less." I shuddered all over, and only found strength to say, "In God's name, keep quiet!" My friend took no notice of my entreaty or of my terror, and went on, "Never mind! persons of resolution are rare." I turned the conversation to save myself from the consequences of this dialogue, and the expedition was finished without Jean-Bon's being able to resume it. We landed, and the Emperor's suite followed as he returned to his palace. As we went up the great staircase I was by the side of Jean-Bon, and the Emperor seven or eight steps above. The distance emboldened me, and I said to my companion, "Do you

know how terribly you frightened me?" "Yes, indeed I do, and am surprised you found your legs to walk up; but be assured that we shall weep tears of blood because this day's expedition was not his last." "You are a madman." "And you an idiot, saving respect to your Excellency."

We came to the anteroom. Despatches had just arrived, so important that not a moment could be lost in opening them. The Emperor went into his study to read them, and the dinner was put back. The anteroom was full of chamberlains, aides-de-camp, orderly officers, and secretaries, distinguished by richer or plainer dresses of refined elegance. Those who wore them did them justice by the politeness of their manners, and a courtly language that was beginning to be formed. The old member of the Convention was a blot in the picture, in the plainest possible prefect's uniform; the rest of his clothes were black, even to the neckcloth. It seemed that he had more than once experienced the amiable witticisms of the gilded troop on this head, for on that day they appeared to be resuming conversation interrupted the day before. M. Jean-Bon allowed these gentlemen to exhaust all the shafts in their gilded quivers, and then answered, with a coolness that added to the power of his words,—

"I really am astonished that you are bold enough to attend to my dress and the colour of my stockings on the day I am to dine with the Emperor and Empress. You do not tell me all; you are shocked to see me asked to such a dinner, and the moment my back is turned you will say, 'Really it is past belief the Emperor should invite to dine with the Empress—the new Empress—a member of the Convention, a voter,* a colleague of Robespierre in the Committee of Public Safety, in whom you can smell a Jacobin a mile off.'"

* *Un votant*—equivalent to a regicide.

"But really, Monsieur Jean-Bon, why should you put such nonsense into our mouths? We respect ourselves too much ever to allow ourselves . . ."

"Not at all, gentlemen. It is not nonsense, but fact. I confess it. Europe was then leagued together against France, as it is now. She wanted to crush us with all the moral and material forces of the old civilization. She had drawn a circle of iron around us. Valuable cities had already been betrayed to her. She made progress. Well, the kings were defied. We delivered our territory, and retorted upon them the war of invasion they had begun upon us. We took Belgium from them, and the left bank of the Rhine, which we have united to this very France which, at the commencement of the war, they had determined to dismember and divide. We have established our preponderance, and compelled these same kings to come humbly to us and sue for peace. Do you know what government obtained, or prepared, these results? A government composed of members of the Convention of mad Jacobins, with their *bonnets rouges*, coarse clothes, sabots, and nothing to live on but coarse bread and bad beer, and who, when spent with fatigue and watching, threw themselves on mattresses on the floor of the room where their meetings were held. These are the sort of men that saved France. I was one of them, gentlemen; and here, as well as in the Emperor's chamber, which I am going to enter, I glory in it."

The general answer was, "There is no accounting for tastes; but while granting to the administration of the period the justice due to it on military matters, there are many of its actions that it is impossible to glory in. I protest against that expression; it is too strong."

"And I maintain it," replied Jean-Bon. "Besides, wait a little while; Fortune is capricious. She has raised France very high. Sooner or later she may throw her

down. Who knows?—perhaps as low as in 1793. Then it will be seen if she can be saved by anodyne remedies, and what can be done for her by spangles, embroideries, feathers, and especially white silk stockings."

We were informed that the Emperor was ready for dinner, and we went into the dining-room. The Emperor appeared there almost at the same moment. His forehead was loaded with clouds, and he was so absorbed in reflection that he only took a mechanical part in what passed around him. However, he sat down and ate very little. He spoke to the Prince of Nassau two or three times on trifling matters, and paid no attention to the answers; so that they seemed to be playing at cross purposes. He asked the Prefect if he would not soon see to the pavement of Mayence, as it was detestable. The Empress found opportunity of saying a few words, and spoke with lofty modesty; but the answers were less abrupt, and the Emperor threw in some words far from flattering to the Emperor of Austria. For my part I only received very momentary notice from His Majesty. At dessert he had a large dish of apricots before him, and condescended to send me one. Almost immediately after dinner the Emperor went into his private apartments, and caused me to be informed that he expected me to work next day as usual. I entered the cabinet at ten o'clock. The Emperor gave me very brief decisions on four or five matters, summarily adding his reasons; and he told me to make fair copies, that he might sign them the same evening. He was pacing quickly up and down the room, and I remained standing, awaiting permission to sit down. He made a sign to me when to begin writing. I went straight to his chair, which had nothing about it that could warn me. The Emperor, if not offended, was at least very much astonished, and sharply told me to take

another place and leave him his. I obeyed with all speed. The work proceeded. The Emperor wanted a paper that was on the table where I was busied. I was a little while in finding it, and, as soon as I did so, sprang from my new place to give it to him. The Emperor read it, and the contents gave him occasion to ask me a question, which I replied to, joining in his walk. Thence arose a discussion that lasted two or three minutes, after which he made me a sign to go on writing. I cannot think where on earth my head was that day, for again I went and sat straight down on the Emperor's chair, and wrote there as quietly as if I had been anywhere else. The Emperor gave me time to finish my sentence, and then said to me, in a tone entirely free from severity, "So you have made up your mind to sit in my seat? You have chosen a bad time." The last word astonished me wonderfully, and emboldened me a little. The position of the Emperor and myself that day was remarkable. I could not help concluding from the nature of the business with which he was chiefly occupied, and from the expressions that fell from him unawares, that he had received some bad political news, of which he did not like to speak. We were years away from the time when he was going to have a more formidable army than ever, when the King of Denmark was furnishing him with forty thousand horses for his cavalry, &c., &c.; and yet only five days had passed between that on which he had so talked and that on which it escaped him that it was a bad time to sit in his seat. The reason was, that between the two speeches the Emperor had received the tidings of the defection of Bavaria, and the more than equivocal proceedings of Austria. It is rare, however short the interview between two persons in such a state of feeling, for their conversation not to tend

towards the secret and unavowed thoughts of both. So when the Emperor, closing the business for the day, spoke a word of the intrigues that were getting up in the rear of his army, and of the necessity of putting them down, I replied that I had no apprehension but for the county of La Mark, and that was the reason I had been so desirous not to have the monopoly of tobacco established there during the war, without a thought of hindering it in time of peace. I added, "It was a slight concession. There are critical moments when the spirit of a country requires to be handled with care." "I understand you," replied the Emperor, casting an animated look on me; "you advise me to make concessions, to use circumspection, and especially to pay great respect for public opinion; these are the catch-notes of the school you belong to." "Sire, I belong to no school but that of the Emperor." "What you say is a form of speech,—nothing more. You are of the school of the worshippers of an idea, like Regnault, and Rœderer, and Louis, and Fontanes; no, not Fontanes, I am wrong, he belongs to another set of fools. Do not you think I can see the bottom of your thought through the veils in which you wrap it? You are one of those who in the bottom of their hearts sigh for the liberty of the press, for free oratory; and who believe that public spirit is all-powerful. Well, you shall hear my last word." Then, carrying his right hand to the hilt of his sword, he added, "While this hangs at my side—and may it long hang there—you shall not have one of the liberties you sigh for: not even, Monsieur Beugnot, that of making a fine oratorical discourse of your own sort in the tribune." "But, sire, I cannot tell what enemy can have so calumniated me to your Majesty's mind." "No one; but I know you, and better than you do yourself. Bring your papers

to the study this evening." I had my dismissal. In the evening I received the usual order, "To-morrow at ten o'clock; and do not go out without leaving word where you are to be found."

I returned next day at ten o'clock. The Emperor was busied with his secretaries, and sent me word to come again at four o'clock in the afternoon. The day was Sunday, and I was invited to dine with M. Jean-Bon Saint-André. I came at two o'clock. I knew it was dinner-time, and begged the master of the house to arrange matters so that I might be able to attend at the Palace of the Teutonic Knights at half-past three, to take the Emperor's orders. Jean-Bon said to me, "The Emperor will no longer be here at the time he told you. He is going—if he is not already on the road. Where do you come from, not to know that?" I was obstinate. I maintained to Jean-Bon that he was misinformed; I produced my proofs to the contrary. "Well," returned he, "you are mystified: it is the favourite game of our glorious master. But I repeat to you that he is off, and you had better do the best you can to console yourself, for very probably we shall never see him again." As he ended his speech, there entered a chamberlain, who had run all the way, and who said to us, quite out of breath, "Gentlemen, I have the honour to inform you that the Emperor is going to start." "And I," answered Jean-Bon Saint-André, "have the honour to reply that the Prefect is going to dinner." As I did not take part in Jean-Bon's audacious censure or his unrestrained behaviour, I ran as fast as I could when the chamberlain called us, and arrived in the court of the palace just as the Emperor was getting into his carriage. I asked him his orders. He told me to stay at Mayence as long as was necessary to finish the Hanau business, and after that to go back to Düsseldorf, unless I should receive orders

to the contrary. I went back to dinner, where the plainness of the arrangements savoured a little too much of the old member of the Committee of Public Safety; but it was seasoned by a declamation by the master of the feast against conquests and conquerors, in which he unreservedly cited Cæsar, Alexander, and Bonaparte as examples of the misfortunes that never failed to pursue them. The orator had not the slightest expectation that scarcely four months would have passed before he himself should perish in a hospital, the victim of his own bravery in succouring the poisoned remnants that our conquered armies poured in on us in crowds. I had also the sad duty to perform; and I may do myself the justice to say that I spared myself no more than did the Prefect of Mayence, but my hour was not yet come.

I spent a week at Mayence. I made excursions in the neighbourhood, which is very picturesque, and did not fail to go and see the Castle of Biberich, which had attracted the Emperor's attention while he was out on the Rhine. I did not regret the expedition. The position is one of the most beautiful known, and the castle is not wanting in grandeur. At last I returned to Düsseldorf by the splendid road along the banks of the Rhine from Mayence to Cologne; and this monument of the stay of the French in Germany would, if they had left no other, be an eternal commemoration. I met my daughter and her children on the road, coming to spend the rest of the summer season with me. She wished to be within reach of the armies, so as to get more speedy news of her husband.* Our arrival all

* General Count Curial, commanding a division of the Infantry of the Guard. Philibert-Jean Baptiste François Joseph, Count Curial, was born at Saint Pierre d'Albigny, in Savoy, on the 21st of April, 1774. He served in the campaigns of Italy and Egypt, and was wounded at the siege of Saint Jean d'Acre, as Colonel of the Fusileers of the Guard; General of Brigade at Friedland; General

together was an event in the house. We anticipated all the pleasure that was compatible with the anxiety always the consequence of the father of the family being absent with the army. Except for that, the joy of our meeting was perfect, though I took my share in it with the foreboding that it might be not of long duration. The prophecies of that unlucky Jean-Bon kept me in a state of alarm.

The condition of the grand-duchy was not such as to reassure me. The Minister for Home Affairs, who was rather inclined to our side, confirmed the news that the Cabinet of Vienna would cease to support the Emperor, and that it was going to organise an army of observation, to be always ready to seize the office of mediator between the Emperor's son-in-law and the Emperor of Russia. For those who knew the character of Napoleon there could be no doubt that with him the position of a mediator would soon be changed into one of complete hostility. M. de Nesselrode told me that Bavaria was rushing vehemently upon its newly taken course, and that the best proof he could give me was that persons of the highest rank were hastening to place themselves under the command of General de Wrede. Lastly, he added that even Saxony could not be entirely reckoned on. The King would be faithful to his alliance with France at any price; but the army might act like that of Prussia, cease to obey, and pass over to the ranks of the Germans. "Then it will be," I said to him, "a real

of Division at Essling (1809); he made the campaigns of Russia and France at the head of the Voltigeurs of the Guard, and powerfully contributed to the success of the battle of Hanau (1813), which retarded for some days the entrance of the allied armies into French territory.

Under the Restoration, Lieut.-General Count Curial was created Peer of France, and a knight of the King's order. Summoned to take the command of the camp at Saint Omer, he died at Paris on the 29th of May, 1829, in consequence of an accident to his carriage at Fismes, on the occasion of the coronation of Charles X.

crusade against the Emperor?" "I really believe so," answered Nesselrode, "and that it is going to break out everywhere. I hope we shall remain quiet here. The matter will be settled far away from hence, and without our being able to add or subtract one grain from the balance. This consideration and the neighbourhood of France should reassure us." But I was by no means reassured at the end of this conversation. Indeed, the information I received from all sides confirmed what our Minister of the Interior had told me. I thought it was part of my duty to give information, and I performed it without concealing from myself that I ran the risk of offending the Emperor; perhaps of incurring disgrace. I did not do so without reflection. I weighed the reasons for and against for twenty-four hours. Contrary reasons came to me in crowds, but always supplied by self-interest; while the others were inspired by fidelity, affection, and gratitude. I could not hesitate any longer without blushing for myself. I took two days to compose the report. While preserving the moderation towards the Emperor inspired by respect, and choosing the forms that seemed most likely to ensure my pardon, I did not conceal the truth from him. However, I fear that this composition was taken by him for a flagrant proof of the ideology of its author, and considerably diminished his confidence in my ability. In fact, in a fortnight afterwards the members of the government in the grand-duchy were doubled in numbers. I had entrusted the general direction of the customs to M. David, a young man full of zeal, knowledge, and ability, who thought that politeness never did any harm, and employed a good deal of it in business. A director of the customs named Turc came down on us from Wesel, to be his complement, and really was so, an ignorant and coarse man, but armed with the kind of dogged zeal that has made the fortune

of so much mediocrity. General Damas, respected and obeyed in the grand-duchy, had his double in General Lemarrois, an aide-de-camp of the Emperor, who displayed much moderation and good sense in his mission. M. d'Argout was entirely withdrawn from my superintendence in the financial operations he had charge of, and put under that of Director Turc, with whom this auditor, young as he was, did not harmonise ill. I have never been able to discover the cause of this sudden attack upon the grand-duchy. The Emperor could not have then foreseen that before the expiration of four months it would be taken from him; to press the country for money to supply his needs was to try to quench an elephant's thirst with a draught from a nutshell. However it was, I easily perceived that the administration of the grand-duchy was slipping out of my hands, and thenceforward made myself familiar with the idea of retirement.

However, blow after blow came the news of the loss of the armies of General Vandamme and Marshals Oudinot and Macdonald. Though the Emperor still kept the great army with which he fought at Leipzic, and likewise retained his genius, and the confused idea that his last effort would be terrible, already the opinion was held in Germany that the strife was all but over, and the French would be driven back beyond the Rhine; for it entered into no one's head that they could be pursued further.

I partook in this security, and sent all my most valuable possessions at Düsseldorf across the Rhine to my family, and kept no one with me but my wife, who stayed all the more willingly that she was far from believing the Emperor's affairs to be as bad as they really were, and rejected all our prophecies from the idea that she had long ago adopted of the universal

power of Napoleon, which fortune could try, but never destroy.'

M. Turc's first proceeding in the grand-duchy was a search for English merchandise. He held an *auto-da-fé* of these infamous goods, first as an action of great glory in itself, next as one of great wisdom in political economy. In the exaltation of his zeal, one fine morning he pounced on all the raw cotton that was to be found in the grand-duchy, and seized the whole as English merchandise. A wicked enchanter, who had paralysed the arms of ten thousand workmen with a wave of his wand, would have done just about as good a thing. I was no sooner informed than I hastened to Turc, and laid before him all the harm he was doing; he was not in the least moved, and displayed to me some letter or another of the Minister of Commerce in France, M. Colin de Sussy, which said that merchandise was coming to the grand-duchy from Cuxhaven, and that he must not hesitate to seize it wherever it could be found. In vain did I tell him that what he had seized was indeed English merchandise, but publicly sold at Frankfort in the name of the Emperor, who had received the value; that the identity could be proved by the catalogue of the sale, giving the number of each bale, with the weight and shape, and the name of the purchaser; and that all the bales which had not been opened had received the leaden seal of the French customs when they left Frankfort, and that of the customs of the grand-duchy when they entered it. M. Turc allowed the facts, but answered that they did not purge away the English origin. And to whatever I could say against this pitch of injustice and barbarity, my friend answered, "I do not deny it, but it does not purge away its English origin." I asked him what he would do with all these workmen out of employment. He replied it was none of his

business. "But," said I, "it is some one's business, and that, namely, is mine. Be so good as to listen to my last words; 'I order you daily to deliver, for all your seizure, to each manufacturer injured by it, as much cotton as he requires to keep his men employed. If you do not do this, everywhere that a demand is made on you, I will. The Emperor has not relieved me from the control of the force of soldiers here, and I will use it even against you to prevent a revolt." "But, sir, what can you do to me? I am sent here by the Emperor." "Sir, any menaces would be out of place on my part; I will do, and I repeat it, even against you, anything necessary to maintain peace in the grand-duchy." "In this case give me an order that shall relieve me of the responsibility." "That is fair." I gave an order on my return that prescribed to M. Turc the course I had begged him to concede. He obeyed. However, complaints arose from all sides. I sent the complainants some to M. Turc, some to M. d'Argout; but I did not make light of the mischief while trying to keep myself out of it. I saw there was necessity for action. I joined my voice to those of the complainants; I addressed memorial after memorial to the Emperor, in which I submitted to him the real facts, and bore witness to their truth. No answer. I took the step of sending four of those principally interested in the seizures to Dresden, where he then was, advising them not to return from Saxony till justice was done them. I had given them a most pressing letter for the Duke of Bassano. My deputies were charmingly received. They had the especial honour of dining at the table of the Secretary of State; but they could not reach the Emperor, and departed with the Duke of Bassano's word that the Emperor was in perfect accord with me, and that anything I did should be approved. They returned

to Düsseldorf with a confidence disheartening to me. I could not tell how to manage to convince them that it was not all arranged between the Emperor, the Duke of Bassano, and myself. I sent them to M. Turc, giving them my promise that, if he would consent to return the seized goods, I would give an order for it. M. Turc answered that these goods were not at all under my jurisdiction, and that he had to account for them to the Emperor, and M. Colin de Sussy, his Minister of Commerce, and that if I took on myself to resume them by force he would make a requisition to General Lemarrois, His Majesty's aide-de-camp, to repel force by force. This was peremptory language, and what was more, next day M. Turc took his measures, and sent all the goods that had been seized to the other side of the Rhine. Some opened bales were the only exception, enough to find work for the men for about a fortnight; and he only made the exception at my earnest entreaty, and on bonds given by the manufacturers to pay for the goods at the current rate, if the Emperor should so order. After that no more news came from head-quarters, and this cruel measure, which I do not dare to call by its right name, was accomplished with all the remains of imperial power.

The establishment of the monopoly of tobacco experienced more serious resistance. In vain were fine paintings of the imperial arms hung over the doors of the offices: paintings and offices were set on fire together; the clerks were beaten, and the tobacco provided by M. Argout was flung into the gutter, the Germans having taken a general oath against using it. Besides, this tobacco was very bad. Bands soon got together really on account of this opposition, or on pretence of it. They gave cause for uneasiness, and I took on myself to secretly advise the agents of the monopoly not to con-

test the point, but to put off the performance of their duty till quieter times. But while I fell back to the best of my power on peaceful methods and necessary concessions, General Lemarrois received orders to institute military commissions, and to have brought before them, without mercy, any who should excite disturbance. The orders he received on this point were so strict that they could only be explained by the Emperor's fear of insurrections in the rear of his armies, such as to impede their return to France. The humanity of General Lemarrois happily moderated the severity of these orders; he was in entire agreement with my views and sentiments. But no opposition could be made to the establishment of the military commissions, and it was necessary to send men for trial before them who had been taken under arms and guilty of criminal violence. It cost two of these their lives. It was not too much, considering the troubles that we had to meet; but it was in fact a thousand times too much, since matters were at such a pitch already that punishments were not examples.

At this time the Emperor had a Count de Bentheim taken to Wesel—not the man we have seen so wonderfully attired and so laughed at in the Imperial Court, but a member of his family, wealthy and respected in that part of Westphalia which borders on the Duchy of Passembourg. After the union of this country with France the Count de Bentheim had held the post of mayor, and applied himself with a good grace to the functions of a magistrate in a commune where he had previously exercised sovereign power. He was accused of having thwarted the efforts of the French custom-house officers in their endeavours to prevent by force of arms the introduction of English merchandise. The accusation was false, the goods had not been introduced;

but this first point gained, the Count de Bentheim had done what came in his way to terminate an undertaking that had lost its object. His conduct was characterised by prudence and humanity; but it must have been odiously misrepresented to the Emperor, for I received orders on that head, as well as General Lemarrois, which gave us both extreme pain. I did what the General could not. I went straight to General Vial, the president of the commission. I showed him the order, and when he had finished reading it, looked at him in silence. The General said to me, "Sir, I understand you; be easy, I will not sully my grey hairs, and I hope that not one of my colleagues will behave differently from me; old soldiers do not understand this style of letter." The trial took place; the Count de Bentheim defended himself. At first he was embarrassed and trembled a little. The prosecuting captain moved for no less a penalty than death. The president said to him, "Take courage, sir count, French soldiers are only terrible on the field of battle; their presence anywhere else is reassuring." M. de Bentheim, indeed, took heart, and pleaded his cause perfectly well. There was only one vote against him, condemning him by a kind of misconception; he was acquitted by the rest of the commission; but the case of acquittal had been provided for, and, if it should occur, orders were given that he should not be released, but sent into France. He was so treated, and at the time of the Provisional Government I found the Count de Bentheim at Vincennes, and had the pleasure of presenting the order for his liberation there.

CHAPTER III.

Battle of Leipzic—Its deplorable Consequences—Flight of the King of Westphalia—Advance of the Enemy—Threatened Destruction of the Imperial Garden—Conversation of Two Soldiers—A War Contribution—General Rigaud—My Departure from Germany—Aix-la-Chapelle—Return to Paris—Interview with the Emperor—Mission to Lille—Death of M. Duplantier.

MEANTIME the battle of Leipzic came upon us. When I received the details of this mournful sister of the battle, or rather passage, of the Beresina, I had no doubt that the French would be driven beyond the Rhine, and that their rule in Germany was ended. I had no further thought than how honourably to evacuate the grand-duchy. From this time I could have made a provision of funds for our departure by somewhat delaying the payment of expenses, by disposing of moveable effects, or by raising discounts; but all these means put together did not amount to much, and their employment would have been unbecoming during the short time I had still to remain in Germany, since it was in too great contrast to the straightforward conduct I had till then pursued. I therefore resolved to make no alteration in my administration, and to go neither faster nor slower than before. All eyes were fixed on me with more than usual attention, and confidence was maintained when they saw me receive, pay, give orders, and even estimates, just as in ordinary times. I sent the budget of 1814 to the Council of State, requesting them to examine it without delay.

But I soon had upon my hands one of the most deplorable consequences of the battle of Leipzic. The hospitals of the French army were speedily obliged to be emptied as far back as to the neighbourhood of the Rhine; they were full of sick and wounded, and typhus was making cruel ravages among them. M. Daru wrote to ask me how many of these sick I could take in. I asked for five hundred, in order that I might not have more than a thousand sent me; but the very first convoy I was threatened with was to amount to 1600. Neither drugs nor furniture were furnished beforehand; they only sent me dying men and officers of health; I had to find everything else. I have often found, and that time more than ever, that extreme necessity finds resources that would never even be thought of in quieter times. In one week I got together all that was needed to set up my hospitals; then Providence supplied me with Doctor Abel to direct the treatment. Abel was a Prussian, of the school of Frederick the Great, in whose court he had lived for some time; a man of wit and learning, and a passionate admirer of French literature, though far from being so of our school of medicine, attributing its timidity to ignorance. He asked me if I would rid him of the knot of useless men who by us are called officers of health, and leave him entire master of the sanitary treatment. I gave him *carte blanche*. He said to me, "Your people are suffering from two things—the detestable food they have had for a month, and their confinement in horrible hospitals; they get poisoned there, and will so go on unless I prevent it." The weather was still fine, and that very day the doctor put his sick into the courts of the castle of Bensberg and the garden of Beurath, and carefully separated the diseases. They had been provided with cloaks to protect them from the sun by day and the chills of night, and precautions were taken for their

being speedily carried into the rooms in cases of rain. When first the sick were so placed out of doors they thought that they were cast out to die, and began to cry out with all the strength they had left; but when they saw me moving among the rows and giving orders to continue their regimen, they took courage. Soup and wine were the only remedies given them, in doses proportioned to the strength of the invalids. We lost men, certainly, and enough, but the number was nothing to those who died in the closed hospitals of Mayence, Cologne, and Wesel. We got free of typhus very quickly, and then the wounded only needed patience and good feeding. The French magistrates, who had charge of the organisation and superintendence of these plague hospitals, attended to them with perfect devotion. Some died, and no one heeded the risk. Jean-Bon Saint-André, at Mayence, flung himself into the midst of the troops of sick that were every moment poured upon him. He wrote to ask me to send him, by special messenger, information of the treatment adopted in the grand-duchy, of which he had heard marvels. His letter was dated from one hospital, I replied to him from another. He did not open my answer; for at the moment of its arrival he had just expired, the victim of a zeal carried to imprudence. Such was the end of the old member of the Committee of Public Safety, leaving behind him universal regrets in the department of Mont Tonnerre, which he had administered with remarkable success, and giving those who had known him privately the right to think that his vagaries in politics proceeded from an ill-regulated love for humanity.

These bloody relics of our army were only a few days in advance of the main body of the army itself retreating on the Rhine, if these scattered bodies of troops, who gained their natural line of retreat as they could, might

be so called. The kingdom of Westphalia had given way to the partial insurrections that preceded the arrival of the troops of the Coalition, and the King had been constrained to fly with his court. He had taken his course to the grand-duchy of Berg, because he supposed that the Emperor would have the power and the will to defend it. I was only informed of his arrival at Mulheim by the courier whom he sent to me from that very place. It was nine at night when I got the news, and I got on horseback immediately to go to the King. I found him accompanied by his ministers of foreign affairs and war, and still surrounded by all the tinsel of royalty. The house that he occupied was full of body-guards, whose theatrical costume, all over gold, was extremely appropriate to the state of affairs. Chamberlains were to be found on the stairs for want of anterooms, not unlike a troop of provincial actors rehearsing a tragedy. It was indeed a great drama that was then performing, but the King of Westphalia and his kingdom were but a little scene in it. Introduced in all state to His Majesty by the first chamberlain, I found him in a violent state of agitation. I allowed King Jerome to prove to me that the disasters which we were all suffering from—princes, subjects, and ministers alike—were owing to his august brother. This first point was incontestable, especially granting that all that we princes, subjects, and ministers were going to lose came to us from the same source. Then King Jerome enlarged on the offers that had been made him by the united powers, to induce him to enter into the Coalition. They not only guaranteed to him the existing kingdom of Westphalia, but promised to enlarge it considerably at the expense of Saxony or the grand-duchy of Hesse. He had loftily rejected such offers, but, to tell the truth, he had sometimes regretted it when he saw everything endangered by an inexcusable

stubbornness. I answered that the King had certainly chosen the more noble part, and that which promised him the highest place in the esteem of his contemporaries and in history; but that, after all, it might not have been contrary to the Emperor's wishes for his brother to keep an important principality in Germany, because a division might thus have been made in interests that were only powerful by being united. The King replied that he had thought of it, but that he had set honour before everything. It was not quite certain that His Majesty of Westphalia had the alternative, but it might be concluded, from what he said about the path of honour, that he would not have failed to take it if he had had liberty of choice. This discussion of motives, though very interesting, did not conduce to any resolution for the actual moment. The question was whither the King should go. He did not at all like to retreat behind the Rhine; he had a notion that all was not lost as long as he preserved a footing in Germany; but while begging him to make any use of me that he could, as far as regarded the grand-duchy, I proved to him pretty clearly that the allied forces would occupy it in the course of two or three weeks. In default of the grand-duchy, the King's notion was to retreat to Holland. Again I easily showed him that Holland would not hold out much longer than the grand-duchy, and that if His Majesty went there it would only be the longest way of getting back to France. To me it seemed that there was only one part for the King to take, and that was to go straight to his lands in France, and to stay there till the opening of the next campaign, at a very short distance of time, when the course of Jerome would be plain enough, to conquer with his brother, or die at his side. The King received my opinion very well. I knew he was worthy to hear it, for

I had observed in him a straightforwardness and resolution beneath all the extravagancies of his youth. If better prepared I have no doubt he would have supported the reputation of his name, great as it was. It was at two in the morning that our conversation ended. I mounted my horse and returned to Düsseldorf with only one servant. The King was afraid for me, and wished earnestly to send an escort with me. I begged him to allow me to decline it, because I should have a better defence in my obscurity, and if need were in the inclinations of the people.

From this day my house at Düsseldorf became a hotel to my old acquaintances of Cassel, who arrived one after another, all equally bewildered after their sudden flight, but without any one despairing of returning to Cassel next spring. My prophecies were greatly contradicted, but I perceived that persons who came to me with the satisfaction given by confidence, left me disturbed and sad; they accused me of looking at the dark side of things, and having lost confidence in the Emperor's genius. It might be supposed that these illusions might remain in ordinary minds, but I could not recover from my astonishment at seeing them shared by M. Siméon, whose clear good sense was proverbial. He was leaving the post of home secretary in Westphalia, and would not discuss with me what would become of both of us when we got to Paris, where we should neither of us have anything to do. He persisted in his confidence in the man's genius, and would not agree with me in thinking that, admirable in preparing and following up a victory, he had no power of bearing defeat or repairing it. I enjoyed the society of M. Siméon till the time when the hostile armies drew near, and it made me forget how painful was the cause. The enemy advanced by measured days' marches, and we could exactly reckon what day

they would enter the grand-duchy. We had to undertake very different work from that which had hitherto occupied us, to endeavour to find means to make the passage of the Rhine difficult to the enemy. All the boats he could make use of were sent across and posted on the left bank. The same was done with the flying-bridge; and all the contents of the arsenal at Düsseldorf were carried to Neuss with all possible speed. I gave orders to transport all the prince's property that the enemy could make use of in war, to the opposite bank of the river. I did not interfere with any of the rest of the moveables; I did not remove the wine in the prince's cellars, nor the furniture lately come from Paris, intended for the Residence; I did not touch the library, or collection of paintings, one of the most valuable in Germany. This conduct was appreciated. I was obeyed, I may even add respected, in these times of weakness and misfortune, as I had been at the summit of our power and prosperity.

The retreating French troops arrived. I was informed that they had occupied the garden of the Grand Court, and were going to cut down the trees to build huts and make fires. I had planted these trees in the happier days, without a thought that they were to fall before the axe of French fugitives from Germany. When I arrived the garden of the great court in front of the hunting-palace, was the only public promenade that the town of Düsseldorf possessed. I at once proceeded to adorn it. At that time French governors were happily universally infected with the desire to leave some monument of their residence in the places to which they had been sent, and this emulation among them contributed very much to redeem the towns of France from their ancient rudeness. The garden I found at Düsseldorf had been laid out like all those of the time, with straight alleys bordered with wych-elms, and ornamented by three or four poor,

tasteless statues, and some yew trees cut into shapes of men or beast.

The inhabitants of the town laid great stress on the preservation of this garden exactly in its existing state; first, because it was splendid in their eyes, and next because it was the resort of a great number of nightingales, which it was feared would be lost if the elms or well-clipped yews were touched. I paid no attention to these apprehensions; I turned the garden upside down, to give it a character of greater ease, and to introduce more appropriate ornaments. There was a general hue and cry against me during the winter, but in spring the nightingales came to my assistance. They returned in greater numbers, and sang their loves still more loudly, than the year before. By their means the people were at last reconciled to me, and became used to the fresh, well-watered lawns and thickets, where silence and shade might at any time be found. The old garden was no longer regretted, except by two or three old conservatives, who could not think that straightforward arguments were consistent with cross alleys.

It was this child of my taste that was suddenly attacked on the arrival of the French troops. I hastened to the place and found there a colonel, to whom I detailed how cruel to the inhabitants of any country was the destruction of the public garden of a city, and said that we were not in a garden belonging to the town of Düsseldorf, but to the Emperor. It was by his orders, at his expense, and for the embellishment of one of his palaces, that the garden was planted; and it would be strange to have it laid waste by his own troops. The colonel, without contesting my fine speech, entrenched himself behind the immediate necessity of wood to boil the camp-kettles, and build the huts. I proposed to quarter the troops in the town, and find lodgings for

them, which would dispense with the necessity of a bivouac, and to procure all the wood that he required, which I would have instantly brought to the spot. Yet I could not move the colonel. He said he was in presence of the enemy, and must bivouac, that the wood I offered him was not suitable, since dry wood gave less heat than green, and that huts must be made of branches. I did not know how to answer these arguments derived from the nature of heat and the requirements of military architecture, when General Damas came to the rescue. He understood the matter better than I, and told me to go home, and that he would settle the business. He came back and advised me to send immediately to the place where the troops were twice as much wood as they required to heat their kettles, and deal planks to make the huts, with all the packing-cloth in the town, and, lastly, to put a hundred louis at his disposal. On these conditions he would warrant the safety of the garden. I hastened to fulfil them, and the garden was saved. So I can say that this Court Garden, which is now one of the most delightful in Germany, doubly owes its existence to me.

So strong is our prejudice in favour of our own works, that I was in raptures at having saved a garden which I had to leave two days after, perhaps never to see it again, and certainly never to be the master of it.

I ordered a distribution of wine to the French troops, at the rate of a bottle to each man. This apparent liberality cost me but little, for I was about to be forced to abandon to the enemy the wine of which I thus disposed. General Damas, knowing that this distribution, which he had at first opposed from prudential motives, would produce a good deal of mirth, nay, perhaps, too much gaiety in the bivouac, proposed to go and visit it at dinner-time. I went with him and General Marx, and

could not recover from my surprise at the speed and readiness with which the huts had been built. These soldiers, having just suffered the cruel defeat of Leipzig, and a long retreat, with its privations, pains, and dangers, had lost nothing of the joviality and carelessness that characterise the French soldier. I gathered, even, addressed to myself, some capital sallies, with the stamp of the guard-room and bivouac. The generals who went with me wished to give me precedence, and that made the soldiers very curious as to my rank. "Who is the tall man in an iron-grey coat?" "Be quiet," answered another, "it is the Emperor's minister." "Indeed, the Emperor's minister! It is very easy to see where he comes from. Out of the grenadiers."* "Who told you he was not a drum-major?" "Oh, no, if he had been a drum-major, he would have drunk all the wine, instead of giving it to us." "I don't care where he comes from, but I should like the Emperor to find us a tall minister like that wherever we go."

I left the place enlivened by the good-humour and pleasant speeches of the guard. I thought that these first men who marched by were very good fellows.

Next day a new business—the arrival of General Rigaud leading the division of the army retreating on Wesel, and announcing that he was only forty-eight hours a head of the enemy. He lost no time in battling for dry or green wood, but struck for a war contribution of a hundred and sixty thousand pounds, payable in twenty-four hours. I requested an interview with the general, and proposed the house I was living in as the meeting-place of the civil and military authorities belonging to the Emperor. The General hesitated, and alleged that I ought to call on him at the Hôtel de Ville, where he was in the midst of business. It was very

* Count Beugnot was very tall

hard for me to have my conference in such a place, where I should find myself face to face with the municipal officers and terrified citizens. I begged the General to arrange some other place. He made up his mind and came to me; but from the beginning I saw that the negotiation would conclude badly. The General, in the first place, was astonished at his own complaisance in coming upon my invitation, and pressed me to furnish him without delay with the means of obtaining his contribution.

I was not at a loss for objections to the right the General claimed; but right was the last thing he troubled his head about. Besides, he had a favourite argument to which he always recurred. "One of two things," he said; "either the Emperor will retake your grand-duchy, and will come to an arrangement with those who have advanced the contribution, or he will not retake it, and then it is so much rescued from the German, namely, the enemy."

Beaten as to right, I took my stand behind fact, and proved to General Rigaud that in the twenty-four hours he was to spend at Düsseldorf, it was quite impossible to raise a contribution of, not to say a hundred and sixty thousand pounds, but of forty thousand pounds, or even of four thousand pounds, because the wealthy inhabitants had left the town a month ago, taking all their valuables with them, so that there did not remain even the mournful expedient of seizing hostages. The General did not take the trouble of answering, and required me to aid him with all my power. I said to him, "I have none of any kind, and, even if I had, I will avow to you frankly I would not make use of it to levy a contribution on the Emperor's subjects." "I can well believe it," said the General. "I have the honour to know you, and to be aware that you are

more German than French." I answered, "I have not the same advantage with regard to you, and am scarcely jealous of it." With that I rose, the General did the same. I opened the door of my room for him, and escorted him to the bottom of the staircase without seeming to hear the terms of abuse with which he repaid my politeness. He had not reached the bottom of the stairs when a deputation from the Hôtel de Ville came to know whether I had prevailed on the General. I replied that he was inflexible, and pointed out the line of conduct to pursue, namely, to furnish food and lodging to the troops, adding wine as the day before; to treat them, individually, with all sort of respect; and to express regret to the General at being able to do no better, but not to pay him one penny of his contribution. The General returned to the Hôtel de Ville, where, after a great deal of noise, disturbance, and threats, he sat down with his officers to an excellent dinner which had been prepared for him. I was greatly abused at this repast, and there were many resolutions of bringing me to reason when we returned to France.

After that I never heard any more of General Rigaud, who was vanquished by force of circumstances, and convinced that, after deducting from the twenty-four hours he had to spend at Düsseldorf time for a good dinner, and the sleep that generally succeeds it, he had not leisure for exacting a contribution of a hundred and sixty thousand pounds.

Next morning General Rigaud marched for Wesel. I was informed of the progress of the enemy's forces. I saw that there were only twenty-four hours to spare, and considered the question of my retreat. I had left the servants I no longer required at the Residence. I told my house-steward to prepare rooms and a dinner next day for the Count of Saint-Priest, commanding the Russian forces

that were to occupy Düsseldorf. My tutor had been the same as the Count of Saint-Priest's, and this had caused some connection between us in our youth. He was sorry not to find me at Düsseldorf when he got there, and said the only point in which I had failed in true French politeness was in not remaining to do the honours of my dinner.

My arrangements for departure were made as quietly as if for my arrival. The flying-bridge left the station at Neuss to come for me. I was accompanied across the river as far as the town of Neuss by the inhabitants of Düsseldorf, who seemed to have forgotten their nationality in the sincerity of the regrets they showed to me, and the touching attentions paid me.

Thus I left this fair German country after a stay of six years. During that time I had not been exempt from the inseparable varieties of human destiny; I experienced some pleasure and some pain; but, after all, I reckon these six years as among the least unhappy of my life, and find a charm in turning my recollections to them.

I reached Neuss surrounded by a little colony of French officials, and even some Germans, who followed my fortunes, as if I still had any. We were in a very small and inconvenient lodging. The position had no advantage, except the neighbourhood of the grand-duchy, and that very soon became a matter of indifference. I took the step of proceeding with my party to Aix-la-Chapelle. I established an office there to correspond with agents I had left in the grand-duchy, to prepare the accounts of the extraordinary arrangements rendered necessary by the evacuation. I parted with such officials as had come with me, but were of no use in this office, giving each of them a gratuity of three months' pay. I sent an account of these arrangements to Paris, and they

were approved. The Emperor considered my establishment at Aix-la-Chapelle desirable, and at the same time I received orders to proceed to the head-quarters of Marshal Macdonald, not more than twenty miles off, to come to an understanding with him as to what he would require for the organisation of the army that was uniting under his orders. I went to the Marshal, and acquainted him with my mission. He said, "Would you like to see a review of my army? It will not take long. As to the men, it consists of myself, whom you see before you, and of my Chief of the Staff, General Grundler, who will be here presently; and as for materials, they at present consist of four straw-bottomed chairs and a deal table. I write every day to Paris to say that it is a mere jest to call what you see Marshal Macdonald's army; I loudly demand a real army, for I am far from sharing the general opinion that the enemy will not cross the Rhine. It is enough for me to see the direction he gives his troops, and that they are going to pursue us, even into the depth of winter, to convince me that the Rhine itself is not the conclusion of their march; and upon my word, if the Emperor has only such armies as mine to oppose to them, the enemy will scarcely stop till they reach Paris. This," added the Marshal, "is what you and all of us must tell the Emperor; for the danger is extreme, and the time for boasting is gone by." I gave an account of my visit without repeating the naked truth, but I insisted on the necessity of forwarding troops to the Rhine, where subsistence for them might easily be found. The only want felt here, I said, was that of soldiers.

When I returned to Aix-la-Chapelle, I resumed my work at my accounts, and at putting the archives of the grand-duchy in order, having brought them with me. My stay there at that time was not unpleasant. The French who had held places during the occupation of

Germany, kept collecting there, and there were cultivated men among them, good to listen to. Our place of assembly was the house of the Prefect, M. Ladoucette, who never failed in any of the obligations forced on him by the course of events, and performed them nobly. I had known him in those prosperous times, as yet so little distant from us, when he had expressed towards the beautiful Pauline the sentiments against which it was so hard to guard oneself. Times were much changed in my eyes, but not so much in those of M. de Ladoucette, who believed, like almost all the dwellers on the left bank of the Rhine, that the river was a barrier which the enemy would never dare to cross. This opinion, universally adopted, kept up a feeling of perfect security in the Rhine Provinces. The taxes were gathered there, levies of the conscription were made, and all the public service was performed as easily as in the years of Austerlitz and Jena.

At the end of a month, the work I had to do at Aix-la-Chapelle was finished, and I applied to return to Paris. M. Rœderer replied that he had reason to believe that the Emperor intended me to remain in the town nearest to the grand-duchy, ready to return thither as soon as His Majesty's arms should have opened the way, and that he would not speak of my return unless I persisted. I replied that I hoped, as much as any one could, that the Emperor's arms would resume their sway in Germany, but that some time must elapse, and that any way I should have time enough to get from Paris to Düsseldorf when events should recall me. So I persisted in asking to return, obtained permission, and went to Paris.

The day after my arrival, I appeared at the Emperor's levée. The master was still there, but his face, attitude, and speech were no longer the same. The soldiers, the very courtiers, had something sad and worn about

their bearing. The Emperor addressed a few words to me as he passed, and desired me to wait, which signified a command to an instant private audience. I had not long to wait for him. When alone with me, the Emperor commenced the following conversation:—

"You come from Aix-la-Chapèlle?"

"Yes, Sire."

"How long have you been on the road?"

"Three days and two nights."

"You have not been quick."

"I was not told that the Emperor's service required more speed."

"You have been at Mulheim and Cologne; you have seen Marshal Macdonald, he has troops with him; how many men?"

"I do not know the exact number of men that compose the army of Marshal Macdonald; he was complaining of the delay of troops in joining him, and was very impatient when I left him."

"You give me no answer. I know very well that you could not count his men; you are not an inspecting officer of reviews; but did not Macdonald inform you in conversation what force he had got together?"

"I fear, Sire, that at present it is only a very small number."

"You fear; there is no question of your fear; either you do not know the truth, or are afraid to tell it; at least, have you seen on your road bodies of men and single soldiers hastening to the Rhine?"

"I met a battalion of the 18th coming out of Ghent, four detachments of the old Dutch guard, and single men to the number of a hundred and fifty or two hundred."

"You can count the troops on the road very well. You do not see them on parade. There is something, I

cannot tell what, between you and Marshal Macdonald. There is no apprehension of the enemy's daring to cross the Rhine in the country you have left?"

"I have not seen anyone in a state of uneasiness, and business went on in the whole of the departments I passed through, just as it did four years ago; taxes were paid, conscriptions raised, and public order nowhere disturbed. I counselled the prefects, as I was desired, to be gentle; they all told me there was no need. It is thought that if the enemy makes some appearance of crossing, it will only be to get peace more quickly."

"Peace, peace, it is very easy to say that. Can I possibly give up all I am master of in Germany? I have a hundred thousand men in the fortifications on the Elbe, Hamburg, and Dantzig. If they were mad enough to cross the Rhine, I should march against them and overthrow them. I should collect my garrisons to fall on their rear, and you would see a fine disaster."

"Will the Emperor grant me the favour of returning to his Council of State?"

"No; I have other views for you. I shall send you back whence you came: wait for orders here. Have you brought the papers of the grand-duchy with you? Put them in order, and prepare your accounts."

I remained at Paris, myself astonished at the confidence I found in all minds. The most depressed despaired of our conquests beyond the Rhine, but no one believed that the Allies would dare to pass it. M. de Talleyrand alone considered the Emperor lost, either from his extreme envy of him, or because he already had information from the enemy's camp, through the Duke de Dalberg. However, events hurried on. Marshal Macdonald, with no force to oppose to the Allies, allowed the frontier, that he was charged with the defence of, to be insulted on all sides; and well-informed persons could

see that if the enemy seemed to hesitate about passing the Rhine, it was because he did not wish to operate except with masses sufficient to make the measure decisive. The letters I received from Germany left me no doubt on this head. If I did not communicate them to the Emperor, it was because I was persuaded that he was at least as well informed as myself, and that he would be very angry at my being so. Meanwhile, M. de Montalivet, Minister of the Home Department, came to me from the Emperor, and proposed to me to go to Lille, to relieve the Prefect, M. Duplantier, who was prevented from continuing his functions by a chronic malady. I had risen to the Council of State, from a prefecture superior to that of Lille. I had been employed with the title and style of minister for eight years, first at Cassel, then at Düsseldorf, and while in residence at the latter place had acted as prince. The princes, my neighbours, had paid attention to me in proportion to their fear of the Emperor. My mind had insensibly become wound up to German haughtiness, and a thing that I had pitied, and almost looked on with horror, on my arrival in Germany, I thought at last quite natural and almost right. When I could reflect, I looked down on myself, but I continued to be drawn down on the pleasing incline. My astonishment may be imagined at hearing a proposal to make me a prefect. I was very uncivil to Montalivet, who only said that he must inform the Emperor of our conversation. He did so that day, and the next I received an order to go to the Tuileries. Only three weeks had passed since my last audience of the Emperor, and that he was no longer the same man may be plainly seen.

"What is this? The Minister of Home Affairs says that you will not go to Lille."

"I am always ready to obey the Emperor; but per-

haps he may himself feel that, after having done me the favour to appoint me his minister at Düsseldorf, and having given me the uniform and style of one, I cannot very well again be employed as Prefect. Conclusions would be drawn from it of some disturbance and disorder in affairs; that is, happily, very far from being the case."

"Indeed I hope so; but I do not understand you. Anyone willing to serve me must serve where it is convenient. I do not know if you have been minister or not; I have no time to consider it; but if I sent you anywhere as sub-prefect, your duty would be to go."

"No doubt, Sire; so it is only in the interest of your authority that I venture to allow myself to make an observation. I think that a man who has filled a considerable post is less fit than any other to fill an inferior one, because he comes to it with a sort of appearance of disgrace; for, in a word . . ."

"In fact I am in haste. . . . You must go to Lille. I am told that Duplantier is killing himself in my service. That is no good to him, nor to me either.* There is much to do there. This department of the North is one of the gates of France. You have ten places to provision, and the National Guard to set on foot. The National Guards of that department are excellent; the inhabitants, who are really brave, require to be stimulated. Have as little trafficking as you can; do the work by yourself and your own people. You shall not want for money.

* This speech of the Emperor's reminds me of an anecdote that amused us much at the Council of State in 1807. Portalis, Minister of Religious Worship, came to the Emperor one day with cast-down face and eyes full of tears. Napoleon said to him, "What is the matter, Portalis, are you ill?" "No, sire, but I am very unhappy; the Archbishop of Tours, poor Boisgelin, my comrade and friend in youth . . . ." "Well, what has happened to him?" "Alas, sire, he is just dead." "That is all one to me, he was of no more use to me." "As the Emperor takes it so, I am quite consoled." And, indeed, a smile soon appeared on the minister's lips, and his grief was easily comforted.

You will have enough to do; but the country is rich. Raise what is necessary, nothing more."

"The Emperor may reckon on my zeal. It would be increased, if possible, by the confidence that he deigns to show me; but may I be permitted to ask him under what title I am to present myself in the department of the North?"

"In truth, Monsieur Beugnot, you rather exceed——"

"I ask the Emperor's pardon a thousand times."

"A fine moment to talk about titles! Present yourself as prefect, as minister, as emperor if you dare, only do what I want. How can you take up my time with such follies, when my head is distracted from morning to night? Your Macdonald prevents nothing, stops nothing. Clouds of Cossacks are devastating the departments of the Rhine. I have to arrange for defence at all points, and with what? And at such a time I put one of the keys of France into your pocket, and you come and talk to me about titles! That is the sort of thing to do when there is nothing better on hand. All the world tells me you are a man of sense. You do not show it."

"Perhaps the fault is the Emperor's."

"Ah!"

"Why has he elevated me beyond my capacity?"

"Very good. Start this evening, or to-morrow morning at latest. You will correspond with my ministers. If you have anything of importance, or that is serious, to inform me of, you may write to me direct. I give you authority. Adieu, Count Beugnot. I wish you a pleasant journey."

I started next day, and before getting into my carriage went to take leave of the Minister of the Interior, and he told me that he had heard from the Emperor that I had accepted at last. He had mentioned our

conversation of the day before to him, saying, "Beugnot's head is turned, as if by the waters of the grand-duchy. He has come back as foolish and vain as Murat."

In spite of, or because of, my vanity, I arranged with the Minister of the Interior that I should retain the title of Minister of the Grand-duchy of Berg and Councillor of State, and that I should present myself at Lille as if charged with a temporary mission in the Northern department.

I arrived at Lille, and found men and things equally well disposed for what I had to do. The administration was no longer in existence: it had perished under M. Duplantier, without his caring. This M. Duplantier was an old magistrate, attached to the royal family from his youth, proscribed in Fructidor, and persecuted in more than one way till the 18th Brumaire. He did not even then give up at first; but when he saw that Napoleon was taking to monarchical forms he became reconciled to the new government, and obtained from them one of the smallest French prefectures, that of the Landes. He was at Mont de Marsan when the Emperor went by on his return from Spain. The prefect, as was right, hastened to meet him. The horse he rode was apparently too fresh, or the rider too heavy; and in this conflict M. Duplantier had the honour and the misfortune to break his thigh in sight of the Emperor, who remembered it, and appointed him to be Prefect of Lille when there was a vacancy a few months later. No man had ever formed more lofty ideas of the dignity of a prefect. He was incessantly occupied with questions of precedence and supremacy, as alone worthy of him, and left all the rest to his subordinates. He had easily made people put up with haughtiness bordering on arrogance in a little town like Mont de Marsan, where there was no rival to the prefect; but at Lille mat-

ters were not the same. He there encountered military authorities, who are always touchy towards the prefect, a bar not without pretensions, and a large and wealthy population, such as required tact to manage. Of this M. Duplantier understood nothing; and even if the state of his health had not made it necessary for him to retire, he was in no condition to meet the difficulties of the moment. I asked him whether there was any matter of importance in the administration which he had not completed, and would like to explain to me. He answered, "Only one; but I consider that as of most pressing importance: it is to get two pieces of ordnance placed in the court of the prefect's house." He took me to a coach-house, where he showed me these two cannons, bearing the name of the department and the year in which they were cast. I expressed some doubt to him of the success of this claim. I knew no examples of it, and I could see no reason for adorning the court of a prefect's house with a kind of trophy of which sovereigns are very reasonably chary. "That is very probable," replied he; "but here are the pieces cast, and the carriages ready. I have marked in the court the places where they ought to be put. I have already written to the Duke of Bassano about it, and he has not had time to answer; but persist and you will succeed. You may thank me for it; for then the soldiers will know that a prefect goes for something in a garrison town."

On the way to see the cannon, I asked M. Duplantier if a house to the right of the prefect's residence, and looking on the garden, but appearing separate, formed part of the mansion. He answered, "To my sorrow it is; and it is that wretched house that has, as you see, destroyed my health, so bad as you see." "May I ask how?" "How? I will tell you. I proposed to buy this

house, to get rid of the conscription and all its dirt. I paid the owner in good sterling money, and when I came to take possession I found a rogue of a woman in the house who asserted she was the owner's wife, separated from him in bed and board, but with the usufruct of that house secured to her by the decree of separation. I had nothing to do with that, as you may fancy; I wanted the house, and public utility could not be set aside. I sent the bailiffs of my department to turn the woman out. She shut herself in, barricaded herself, and there were ten doors to break open. I hesitated, and considered that it was easier to take the vixen by famine. I placed sentries at all the doors, with orders to let nothing enter. One day, two days, a week went by, and no offers of surrender. The woman put her head out of window as soon as she saw me in the garden, and had the audacity to sing the same verses, always beginning—

'Patience learn, or patience borrow;
Oh, what a great day is to-morrow!'

Can you fancy what happened? Every night she let down a basket by a rope and pulley from a window that looked on the street, and her neighbour filled it with food for the next day, when it was as easily hauled up. If I had not taken measures the siege would have been as long as that of Troy; but at last I took steps, and one day when she was chanting her eternal chorus in my ears—

'Oh, what a great day is to-morrow!'

I cried out, 'No, you vixen, it shall be to-day.' And I at once ordered my departmental company to break open the doors and turn her out with all her goods. This was done; and now comes the astonishing part. Did not this woman take it into her head to denounce me,

and request of the Council of State permission to bring an action against me for entering her house, damages and interest, costs, expenses, and all that sort of pretension? At first I did not pay much attention to it; but as I had to make a journey to Paris, I took advantage of being there to speak of the matter to the Duke of Bassano, and he advised me to mention it to the Emperor. I received His Majesty's promise that I might be easy about it, for the affair would be attended to at the Council of State. However, the Emperor and the Duke of Bassano started on that diabolical Russian campaign, and I was informed that my odd customer had taken advantage of their absence to push on the matter against me. I received a recommendation from some friends to go to Paris. I did not want to do anything, considering it so hard that such a person should be able to disturb a prefect. At last I resigned myself. I came to Paris and saw the Prince Arch-chancellor, and the illustrious M. Regnaud de Saint Jean d'Angely, the coryphæus of the Council of State. To say the truth, I was not entirely satisfied, but was a thousand miles from a suspicion of what actually happened. Well, sir, two days after I got there the Council, under the presidency of M. Cambacérès, after an insolent pleading of Sieur Regnaud de Saint Jean d'Angely, who defended the vixen, as he formerly had the peasants of his village at five shillings a case—the Council, I say, cut me up from head to foot. That was what the Emperor's absence cost me, for if he and the Duke of Bassano had been there, matters would have been very different. There was only one thing left for me to do, and I did it. I had no notion of having my name dragged before the courts with an adversary of that kind; and I paid all that was asked without looking at it. Money wounds are not mortal; that was not what hurt me; but this morti-

fication did me more harm than I can tell you, so that I fell into a bilious condition; it affected my blood, and put me into the state you see. I shall die of it."

It is quite true that M. Duplantier did die of it; but this little circumstance must be added, that, to repair the biliousness of his blood, he daily loaded his conscience with two or three bottles of strong Burgundy, and was not sparing as to coffee or liqueurs. This pleasant diet inflamed the mortification he had suffered from the business of the house, and the two causes together combined into an affection of the chest, which proved fatal two months later. I was afraid of vexing this good man by appearing to turn him out of his prefecture, and, besides, I did not care a bit for it; so I proposed that he should retain the ordinary administration, and turn over to me only what had to do with the provisioning of the places, and setting the National Guards on foot. He agreed, but his health declined so rapidly that the physicians forbade even the appearance of work, and after a few days he left the field quite free to me. So I was obliged to take up the administration of this fine department of the North. There was everything to do then, and the moment was one of such difficulty that I was obliged to leave things provisionally to proceed as they were doing. I contented myself with cutting short the illicit profits that extended to all the administrative operations, and had raised the profits of the prefecture to an incredible height, perhaps to more than eight thousand pounds, and that without scruple on one side or objection on the other. The cost of the office was reduced to nothing, because the desks were filled by conscripts provisionally placed on half-pay, who worked with emulation to get their half-pay confirmed. At the head was a chief who had the mania, very strange in his

position, of never keeping still; for the rest, a man of sense, who did not do his work badly while walking about; and besides—as general secretary an unfrocked monk, a married priest, a good fellow enough, but who had lost his wits from fright. The second time he came to my study, I found him out by his way of burying his hands first in one sleeve of his coat, and then in the other, and by the great humility of his salutation. I remembered that I had seen such manners in a Capuchin brother when he addressed the revered father guardian. I tried this good man, and when I found that the Capuchin was always uppermost in him, I gave him nothing to do. One day he bitterly complained of this, and reproched me with the state of nonentity into which he had fallen since my arrival at Lille. I answered, "What do you complain of, my friend? I have put you a step higher." "How is that, if you please, monseigneur?" For the poor creature monseigneured me as much as he could, and I let him. "When I came," I said, "I found you a monk, and I have made you a canon." He took the joke very well, for it put him at his ease. After that he avowed his original situation, and spoke highly of it, and this somewhat reconciled me to him, so that I not only retained him, but handed him over to my friend Siméon when he succeeded to my place.

CHAPTER IV.

Department of the North—M. de Villemanzy's Mission—Unexpected Visit of M. Laborie—Position of the Emperor—General Maison—His Relations with the Prince Royal of Sweden—The Canonniers Bourgeois of Lille—Declaration of the State of Siege—Provisionment of the Town—Fall of the Emperor—My Departure from Lille—The Crisis in France—Cossacks on the Banks of the Seine.

On surveying the condition of the department of the North, I saw men and things everywhere, but I could not get them together. So I gave up the notion of a levy. I did more; I allowed the young men of good family to reappear. They had fled to avoid the levy of the guards of honour, and I put a stop to the prosecutions of their parents, which M. Duplantier had pressed with severity almost akin to cruelty. I loudly proclaimed that in the condition in which the department might find itself at any moment, the arms of all its children were not too many to defend it, and that no man should be called out or enrolled to serve beyond its limits. I thus gained this first result, that the National Guard everywhere appeared in imposing numbers, and that of Lille might have rivalled the finest and best troops of the line. I had myself enrolled in the first company of grenadiers, and wore the uniform. The second result that I obtained was to effect, as if by enchantment, the provisioning of the fortified places, which I had taken care to make a condition of not calling out the men. The Minister of War kept on pressing me to send forward the bands of the National

Guard, and the rest of the contingents; but having fully explained to him twice in succession why I did nothing, I took the step of not answering him. So I was not discontented with my position in the department. The public functionaries, without exception, approved of my steps, and showed affection for me. I had a meeting of them every Wednesday, to provide for the needs of the week. The Emperor, who had so faithfully promised that I should not want for money, did not send me a penny. So, after sending him information, I laid hands on the Receiver-General's chest. Every Wednesday he laid before me the condition of his chest, and I distributed the balance to the different parties who had to receive, such as the engineers, the artillery, the pay, the expenses of administration, &c., as the Emperor himself did for the general expenses of the state. The opportunity was a good one for the discussion of the extent and urgency of our needs, for which we had not by any means sufficient resources; but as this was understood by everyone, each co-operated as best he might. Peace and good order reigned in the department. The present was endured without murmurs, and the future awaited without uneasiness. The spirit of the inhabitants was excellent. We were in this condition when the Emperor took the measure of sending senators to all the military divisions, to do what I had done at Lille without help. I heard from the Secretary of State that there had been some hesitation about sending a senator to Lille, for fear of some conflict between him and me; but upon consideration it was thought that my powers only extended over the department of the North, which was not the whole division, as the department of the Pas-de-Calais also formed part of it. So it was determined to send a senator thither likewise, but with directions not to interfere with me at all, but only to observe and report

what I was doing. The commission was given to M. de Villemanzy.

M. de Villemanzy was an old army commissary, who had been employed forty years before in America, with the army of General Rochambeau. Elected to the Constitutional Assembly, he had shown some ability in the military committee of this Assembly. He had ever since been almost always in full employment, and the Emperor had finally given him the most honourable recompense of his long services, by making him a member of the senate. He was by this time pretty well worn out in mind and body, and employed all his remaining strength in easy details, to which he attached great importance, and most honestly admired himself in his works. I knew, as I have just said, that he had received orders not to oppose me. He thought I did not know it, and approved of my work in a tone that I secretly laughed at. He had, or affected to have, an entire confidence in the Emperor's star, and promised he would not leave the division till His Majesty had swept all our enemies out of the French territory. "Monsieur le senateur," said General Levasseur, the commanding officer of artillery, one of the most learned and amiable men in the army, "would you like to buy a house? I know of a very nice one for sale close to the one I occupy." M. de Villemanzy said to me quite low, "What did M. Levasseur say, then? I think he made some allusion to the Emperor. If I was sure of it, I would treat him as he deserves; for notwithstanding my age and dignity, he should find he had some one to do with."

I reassured my old senator; but he continued to cherish a resentment against M. Levasseur, who envenomed it by cutting dry jokes, in which he excelled.

Meantime the Emperor had gone to take the command

of his army. M. de Villemanzy, who was better supplied than myself with correspondents at Paris, was obliging enough to bring me the news daily; they had reference to two points, the recruits that flowed into the army, and the enemies' losses. I kept a note of the thousands of recruits, and found that by the beginning of February they amounted, according to M. de Villemanzy, to a hundred and eighty thousand men. As for the enemies' losses, they were quite another affair; and now, fifteen years after, I still do not know whether M. de Villemanzy was a dupe himself, or wanted to make me one. It is true that for a long time I never allowed myself to make a remark. But my patience failed when, on the news of the combats of Brienne and La Rothière, he attempted to prove that the enemy was retreating. That was too much; my property was then the field of battle; my town house had been made into a military hospital; my farms had been burnt, my farmers put to flight, my estate entirely devastated, and I had only too much reason for differing with the senator. I frankly told him that the letters with which he was lulled were mere rodomontade, and that he might consider his mission concluded, and return to Paris, if he did not wish to run the risk of being shut up in Lille, and having to submit to military authority, the only law recognised in time of siege. M. de Villemanzy made a show of remaining firm, but I could see that he was shaken.

At this time I received an unexpected visit from M. Laborie. Who did not know Laborie? or has not heard of his incredible activity, his spirit and gaiety, his good and bad fortune, his devotion to every one except himself and his own family; and more than that, the singular influence he exercised on events that passed in a sphere far above his own?

Laborie passed through the worst times of the Revo-

lution bravely and unflinchingly. When the days became less dark, and after the 9th Thermidor, power began to take a more endurable form in the Committees of the Convention, among which was that of Public Safety, Laborie obtained a place in this latter, and from that time till the ministry of Prince de Polignac, he never ceased to be the most quick and subtle agent, the most indefatigable of all in authority. If one of those in power gave signs of repelling him, he came back again in so many different shapes, that he managed to thrust himself on, whatever they could do. If the perseverance of his efforts was inferior to the force of repulsion, he worked to undermine the man who opposed him, and to substitute another of his own choice. Unhappily he was too successful; but how, and by what means? How was it that an individual, apparently so inconsistent, assumed this strange ascendancy over public destiny? By the most incredible activity that any human creature has ever been endowed with, striking every day and every moment on springs apparently small, but whose movements, when multiplied and succeeding each other, produced a shock. In the same day Laborie has been present at a mass said by the Abbé Legris Duval, dined with M. de Talleyrand, lost his money at the Hôtel de Luynes, passed part of the night with Sainte Foix and his mistress, and hurried from them to the matins at Les Missions Etrangères. And he did all this quite simply and naturally, without embarrassment, like a fish swimming in the water. It is impossible to believe what a man can do who has quicksilver flowing in his veins instead of blood.

The pretext for the visit he paid me at Lille in the month of February, 1814, was a cause which he said he came to defend in the law courts at Lille. I was so cer-

tain that there was a reason behind this pretext, that I accepted it without difficulty, in order not to lose time in refuting it. So the matters of the day came up speedily, and nothing was said about the law-suit. Laborie drew a true and pitiable picture of the Emperor's condition. He could only be considered as lost, and the saddest thing was that the foreign powers were secretly resolved not to treat with him any more. The Congress of Châtillon was an empty form, at most fit to justify determinations taken long before, and which would soon be manifested. In such an extremity one thought of a regency. This belonged to Marie Louise, but she would require a council, and would it not be to the satisfaction of all the world if it were composed of Cambacérès, Talleyrand, Dalberg, a marshal of France respected in the army, and a man of the front rank in literature, like our common friend M. de Fontanes? Laborie asked me what I thought of the composition of this council, and what part I should take if it were established. I answered that I was, thanks to Heaven, far removed from such lofty considerations; the Emperor had sent me into the department of the North, to provision the strong places, and to organize the National Guards. That part of my mission was drawing to its conclusion. There was nothing more for me to do at Lille, but the ordinary matters of administration, and that would not be very long; for if our affairs were going as badly as was said, and the enemy made a demonstration against the town, it would all at once be placed in a state of siege, and by that fact alone civil authority would yield entirely to military. In this case, as need might be, I would let myself be shut up in Lille, or would make my way to another town not besieged, but would take care not to leave my department, because if I did so, and a single paving stone remained in the eagle's grasp, I should be

crushed. "My line of conduct was traced out; to obey the Emperor to the end, and after him his son, whatever might be the form of government, and I could not see how I could have any influence on this form, for any power that I had. Laborie would not believe that I should be reduced to such passiveness. It did not escape him what a strong position I was in; I had in my hand the only frontier that was left, and from which everything had to be decided, for the rest of France was invaded. So I could either assist or hinder the project formed at Paris, according as this project might accord with my views, or not. The discussion had became warm without our coming to any understanding, when dinner was announced. "Oh, what good news," cried Laborie, "let us take advantage of it; it is so rare at the present day! I hope you keep a good table, it is a consolation. We can afterwards resume our conversation more successfully, for one is worth more after a good dinner."

Apparently the maxim was correct. After dinner, when the company was cheerful notwithstanding our circumstances, Laborie took me into a window, and reproached me for not being frank with him, and not having treated him as a friend of twenty years. He went on, "Let us speak the truth. You know the Prince Royal of Sweden?" "Not much; but enough to have written him a complimentary letter when he was adopted by King Charles XIII., and to renew my homage every year, on the first of January; my wife was very intimate with the Princess,—but what have these particulars to do with what we were speaking of before dinner?" "Come along, we are button-holding together, and that is not bad. Do not I know as well as you that the Prince is very near, with his army in full expectation? General Maison, who commands the Army of the North, was once his aide-de-camp, and remains his friend. His

officers are devoted to him, and he can dispose of his soldiers. All this is only waiting for a signal; you are mixed up with the party, I do not blame you; when the vessel is leaking everywhere it is allowable to seize the first plank. That is as good a one as any other. I only complain of your keeping silence towards a friend of twenty years' standing, who has been with you in evil and good,—as you can well remember." These complaints of Laborie made very little impression on me, for I did not deserve them; but I could not manage to convince him, and we parted on good terms, for no one ever parted on bad ones with Laborie. However, he had awakened my suspicions of the Prince of Sweden, and I went to General Maison to clear them up.

This general officer was then in command of what was called the Army of the North, and he had his head-quarters at Lille. The strength of this army was forty or fifty thousand men, some assembled in the depôts, with recruits and deserters encumbering the roads. Meagre as it was, the pompous name of the Army of the North was given to it. By the power of talking of it, or lying about it at Paris, they had come at last to believe in the existence of this army. The Minister at War continually pressed General Maison to take the offensive, and laid down for him such operations as would have required the presence of a hundred thousand men under his standards. The general appealed, cursed, and swore, and wrote to undeceive the Minister, who did not take the smallest notice, but persisted in giving orders to resume the offensive, and sent plans from Paris, bravely imagined for an army that only existed in imagination. General Maison, driven to extremity, decided at last, and marched his shattered troop to Antwerp. His selection of this city was fortunate. He held it even longer than he had himself

expected, and the columns of the *Moniteur* were enriched by bulletins from the Army of the North: "General Maison has repulsed the enemy, who are flying at all points; Belgium is delivered, and Holland will be so very speedily." And that was written a fortnight before the allies entered Paris! I do justice to General Maison; he shrugged his shoulders as he read all the wonders he had performed.

I endeavoured to ascertain the nature of his intercourse with the Prince Royal of Sweden. As we were both in the same leaky boat, everything else had to be given up in order to run to the pumps.

General Maison told me that he did indeed suspect that the prince royal had views on the throne of France. The prince had sounded him by means of his aides-de-camp. He had sent some written communications to him, but with the precaution of leaving nothing in his hands. The prince's plan had been well conceived. He began by pointing out that the allied sovereigns had renounced any idea of treating with the Emperor Napoleon on any conditions, and maintained that it would be shameful for France ever to receive again the princes of the house of Bourbon with their émigrés and white cockade. Men should die rather than allow it. There was left a medium course between these two extremities; and though the prince royal did not exactly suggest himself to occupy the throne, he led others to infer that he would be a happy selection, as a Frenchman, as a prince, and as the general of a victorious army. Bonaparte, on the 18th Brumaire, was not so well prepared for the throne; and his succession, dilapidated as it now was, did not alarm the Prince of Sweden at all. General Maison had not the least appearance of joining in the hopes of the prince: he rather ridiculed them in guard-room language, being fully master of the beauties of it.

He proclaimed his fixed determination to defend the Emperor's cause to the last extremity; and if it were written that his cause should fail, he would retire to an estate he owned on the banks of the Rhine, and resume the plough.

I could no longer be in doubt about the intrigue of the prince royal, and every day endeavoured to get to the bottom of it. I knew that emissaries had been sent to several points in the department which were held by the Army of the North, and that the prince's communications with the generals of this army became more frequent. Very soon even all moderation was broken through by the publication of a printed document, certainly without signature or printer's name, but containing a paraphrase of the notions I have above explained, put forth in a style calculated to make an impression on the soldiers. I went with a copy of this document to General Maison, and he told me he had received one himself. He passed lightly over the ridiculous pretensions of the Prince Royal of Sweden; but spoke more forcibly than before of the shame of ever accepting the princes of the house of Bourbon, and I remember that the very notion of their return caused two generals to shed tears of regret and despair, both of them equally worthy men, who were then with the Commander-in-Chief. But everybody began to ask what will become of us if the Emperor has to give in? Then I unfolded the project of a regency that Laborie had brought me, and everyone seemed ready to rally to it. This project had reassured men's minds, and I saw nothing to indicate a different notion in General Maison, whom I studied with a good deal of attention. Some days afterwards I perceived that the agitation around me was on the increase, and thought that the moment was come for sending information. I addressed a memorial to the Arch-

chancellor for the Emperor, in which I gave an account of what was passing. This memorial was sent to him at head-quarters, and a duplicate to the Duke of Vicenza, who was probably still at the conference at Châtillon. The duke has told me that he received it, and nearly at the same moment a note of the Emperor's, full of thunder against the Prince of Sweden. He also told me that the news came from ten different quarters, and even reached the allied sovereigns, which explained the very short stay the prince royal was allowed to make in France. However, he stayed there long enough to have a conference with the king's brother, and enunciated a maxim that the prince has sometimes repeated to me—A hand of iron in a velvet glove is needed to govern the French. Once I ventured to reply that the velvet gloves were easy to find, but that hearts and hands of iron were remarkably uncommon in his family. The prince, who is himself a model of kindness, agreed, and told me I was quite right.

Meanwhile the Russian general, whose army already occupied a portion of the department, proceeded to make a demonstration against Lille, and fired some cannon-shot against us from a great distance. The drum was beaten, and all the works of the place were instantly manned, as if a real attack had been impending. The civil artillery of Lille alone performed this important service. It is a privilege of which they are very jealous, and which they deserved by the bravery and skill they displayed in the defence of the place by Marshal de Boufflers; and they showed they had not degenerated when the Duke of Saxe-Teschen bombarded the town in 1794. The body of artillerymen is composed of inhabitants of good repute, and its existence contributes to maintain a valuable military spirit in the heart of the town, in a place that may be called one of the gates of

France, and on the nearest road to the capital. I had experience that there are few situations so disagreeable as that of a civil magistrate who remains shut up in his office when soldiers are summoned to the combat by impending danger; and the latter do not fail to take advantage of it the next day, and assert their superiority more than ever. So the moment I heard the drum I put on my National Guards' uniform, and went to ask the general in command of Lille to receive me as one of his aides-de-camp. I went with him to the ramparts, and accompanied him on his rounds, taking advantage of the occasion to congratulate the civil artillerymen on their ardour and good turn-out, and proclaiming my determination to fight by their side. Some cannon-shots, without result, were exchanged, and the enemy retired speedily. But this proceeding gained me respect in the city. It caused a talk about the coolness and resolution I had displayed in 1803, when Havre was bombarded by the English, and it was concluded that I should be no encumbrance at Lille if the town was seriously attacked.

This simple demonstration determined the military authorities to declare a state of siege, and this declaration soon had most deplorable consequences. A portion of the suburbs, and the elegant country-houses that had been built within the radius of the fortifications, were immediately levelled. It would have been better, no doubt, to have prevented their construction; but though the law was precise and severe on this point, the military authorities had been emboldened to tolerance, first by the long duration of peace, and next because by the effect of war and conquest our frontiers in this direction had been extended to Maestricht and Luxembourg. This operation, which I thought so severe, was endured without the smallest murmur. Only two poor families came to me, not knowing where to find shelter. It was not difficult

to find them a refuge, as I was so perfectly seconded by the inhabitants.

But that was not all. The declaration of a state of siege seemed to impose the obligation of provisioning the town. I had already taken steps for that purpose. The resident population had been carefully reckoned, and it was considered that a siege might last six months. So stores had been ordered in proportion, and corn, rice, salt provisions, and forage were laid in. The magazines were nearly full, and the stores collected by private persons had also been reckoned on as an addition, in case the siege should last more than six months, or any loss take place in the magazines. It is true the Army of the North had not been reckoned among the consumers; but nothing seemed to show that it ought to shut itself up in the town in case of siege, but rather the contrary. In any case, since this army was not composed of more than three or four thousand men, there would be time to reinforce the magazines in proportion to this increase of consumers, and I had proposed to do so; but that did not suit those who composed, and chiefly those who commanded, this army. They would not entrust to anyone the business of laying in stores. As soon as the state of siege was proclaimed they might be seen, divided into detachments, portioning out the neighbourhood of Lille, and committing depredations like marauders. It was a piteous thing to see these detachments returning to the town, driving before them herds of cattle, sheep, and especially cows with calves, about which the superior officers were very choice. The soldiers, not to be behindhand, carried fowls hung from their firelocks. Nor had butter or salt provisions been neglected. All had been carried off with singular barbarity. They might have done as much harm in a conquered country; but assuredly they could not have done worse. And the

most disgusting thing about it was, that these beasts had no sooner entered the city than they became a kind of siege money. The generals used them to pay their tradesmen, the officers to pay their tavern bills, and when I tried to make some remonstrances on what I thought scandalous, they replied to me that these transactions were quite correct. The essential point was that the beasts should be in the town; after that it mattered very little into whose hands they passed, as they could always be found again at need. This rough way of laying in provisions for the Army of the North lasted several days with the same activity. A superior officer of the Imperial Guard occupied a house contiguous to that of the Prefect, and provisions of all kinds were incessantly arriving there. The public were deceived, and thought that the long files of waggons, and the herds that came to the Prefect's house, were for the magistrate who lived there. I was obliged to undeceive them, causing a public notice to be exhibited informing them that the Counsellor of State, on a mission at Lille, was not laying in, and would not prepare, any stock of provisions for himself and his house, that he would in case of siege reduce his establishment to a single servant, and would receive rations from the public magazines, like any other inhabitant.

This notice was exhibited on a market-day, and produced more effect than I wished; it raised up the country people whom the soldiers had been despoiling so cruelly for three or four days; they concluded that if a counsellor of state considered himself so bound by the common law, a general was not free from it; and they talked of going to the houses where the cattle were shut up, and taking possession of them, to return them to the places they had been taken from. The excitement was great. Happily I was informed in time. I

had some of the most excited at once called before me, and I tried to calm them by advising them to have the value of the cattle and provisions vouched for, as it would be repaid. I experienced in this matter how necessary it is for an administrator to inspire confidence, and how much advantage he can thus obtain in time of need. One of these men, the hottest in the party, said, "Monsieur, do you make us a promise that we shall be paid? If you give us a promise, that is quite sufficient." I answered that I could not promise the payment, because if difficulty arose anywhere, I should be obliged to make it good out of my own pocket, but I would engage to use all possible efforts to obtain it, for it was just, and I added that I conscientiously looked on it as probable. "Spoken like an honest man," replied my questioner. "Well, monsieur, it shall be as you please; but, good heavens, if you could only see how they treat us!"

Thus, having a foretaste of the preparations for a siege, I was not without apprehension of what might be left in store for me during the siege itself; but I was supported by the sense of duty, and felt a satisfaction combined with pride at redoubling my devotion to the Emperor in misfortune. I had seen him at Berlin, at the summit of his power, when, after the wonders of the Prussian campaign, he was master of that kingdom and ruler of Germany. Then he abased kings; but the people still loved his glory and hoped in his genius. To-day people and kings were banded together for his ruin. It seemed inevitable. No matter, I had been one of the earliest workers for Napoleon, and he should find me, if necessary, still one of the last. Whatever the destiny that might await him, there would be always some glory in sharing the fall of such a Colossus.

My determination was fixed on this point. However,

I anxiously watched the march of the enemy's forces, and judged by the results of the action at Montereau that they must be at the gates of Paris. The general officers, with whom I continually was in consultation, all thought that they would never risk entering it. However what other object could there be for their march, and what other end could be assigned to this terrible drama? We were in this perplexity when I received a note in two lines from Paris. "Take care of yourself; the last barrier is broken, the allies will enter Paris this evening or to-morrow." The note was from my friend Dupont de Nemours. My first care after having received it was to run to the post and give orders that no letters should be given out till I had opened those addressed to me. The first courier brought nothing but the *Moniteur* of the 30th of March, still full of official falsehoods. It was not the same with that of the next day. Neither letter nor note was addressed to me, and it was only by reading the *Moniteur* that I learnt the decree of forfeiture pronounced by the Senate, the formation of a Provisional Government, and my appointment to the place of Commissioner for the Home Department. I was in a state of astonishment. Happily General Maison with his army had gone out for five or six days, and I had time for deliberation. After making sure that the news was not in the lesser newspapers, I thought it would not be found in private letters, so I allowed both to take their usual course, with the single exception of the *Moniteur*. I passed the evening in deliberation with the General of Division and the Mayor of Lille. There was no difference in the appearance of the town from the day before, and it was curious that the great news did not come from any quarter before evening; while, to fill up the measure of unexpected events, this same evening I beheld the arrival of my two sons, whom

my wife in some alarm had sent to me with my secretary. I have never ceased to feel deep gratitude to Prince Talleyrand for the honour he did me in summoning me to the Provisional Government, but he did me more service than I deserved, and of a different sort from that I wished.

I had long considered the Emperor as lost; but I had no notion that his misfortunes absolved me from my oaths, and by sending me to Lille he had given a proof of confidence in me that bound me still more closely. The last words that he had said to me sounded in my ears and reached my heart. As long as he had only been powerful I had admired and feared him; but I was touched by the remembrance of this fallen grandeur, which misfortune had at last rendered familiar to me. My part was soon taken, because it was pointed out by duty. I had no cause to examine who was right or wrong in this great debate; I was the Emperor's man, and had to serve him until he released me. If I had lost the power of serving him I ought to retire, and pray for better times for those who should take my place. But my position at Lille made my situation one of difficulty, without confusing the question. The army of General Maison retained a great attachment to the existing order of affairs; chance and prudence had given the command of the divisions to generals who necessarily had no hopes from the Bourbons; they were masters of my person. What would be the result of their deliberations at their return? General Maison had been informed of the journey of M. Laborie, and without coming to an explanation with me he had let words fall in my presence indicating suspicion, and savouring of threats. On my side I suspected him, perhaps wrongly, of being engaged in a third party for the Prince Royal of Sweden. Between two men thus irritated by sus-

picion, and who had been carrying on a secret warfare for three months, the explosion must be a source of danger for one or the other, and physically General Maison was the strongest.

It would only have been possible for me to remain at Lille, after my nomination was made public, by publicly refusing this nomination, as made without my knowledge and against my will; but if General Maison adhered to the Prince Royal of Sweden, this disavowal would not be of much use, and would have the impropriety of contradicting, if it did not compromise, those persons at Paris who had given me so signal an instance of their confidence. So I chose the step of settling the most pressing matters at Lille, and proceeding to Paris myself, to take cognisance there of the state of affairs.

I had spent the night at my desk, and was still there next morning at nine o'clock, when I received a note in the following terms from General Brenier, commanding the division:—

"The General commanding in Lille has the honour to inform the Counsellor of State, commissioner of his majesty the Emperor and King, that the General commanding the army in chief, having been informed of the news that is published of a change of Government, is returning to Lille in haste, and will arrive at two o'clock this day, to repress with severity anything that may be connected with such an event. The Counsellor of State will be prudent to consider whether to await for General Maison, or himself take measures before his arrival."

I perfectly well understood the missive, and that the most pressing course for me was to be off. I was not wrong, for General Maison expressed much vexation, and said to the officers round him, when he returned to the town, that if he had still found me there he would have had me shot. I allow myself to doubt it!

This menace is one of the kind that are easily made when it is impossible to execute them; but it is probable that General Maison would have given himself the petty pleasure of putting me under arrest, and of humiliating in my person the race of civilians, against whom he had a singular prejudice. I selected flight as the safest course, but there were some difficulties in the way of it. I was in a fortified city, with the gates doubly guarded during the last twenty-four hours, and with good reason. There was some fear that my departure might excite a commotion, and if I encountered the smallest obstacle it might soon involve me in danger.

I applied for assistance to M. Cordier, the chief engineer of the department, a man of sense and resolution, and entirely inclined for a change, the necessity of which was plain to him. He respected my scruples, but urged me to proceed to Paris, for information on the state of affairs. He found me in a moment a wicker-work gig, with an old horse, muffled me up in a sapper's uniform, and got into the carriage with me. We passed the gates happily, and when outside he proposed either to go straight to the head-quarters of the general commanding the enemy, Count de Geisnau, who would have me forwarded to Paris from post to post by the military road which he held; or else to proceed across the fields, avoiding, as much as we could, the main road and the towns where, in the universal uncertainty, we might meet with some unpleasantness. It would have been undoubtedly, the safest course to go to the enemy's head-quarters; but I repelled the idea with horror. I considered, with terror, the position I had been thrust into without my knowledge; that I, a worker of the first days of the Empire, who had served the Emperor faithfully for fifteen years, and with such ample recompence—I to whom he had said, "I entrust one of the keys of

France to you"—that I should be reduced to deliberate whether I should go over to his enemies! No; whatever chance awaited me, I would not be a scoundrel in my own eyes. It was not by my own will that I left Lille, and being forced to go to Paris, I wished to go there by the French road. Having come to this determination, we proceeded as we could.

The first place we stopped at was the town of Hesdin. We got out of our modest equipage at the inn nearest to the gate, and partook of a meal proportioned to our apparent condition, when there appeared two corporals' guards of gendarmes, who were carrying on the conscription under difficulties, by main force. An unhappy youth had lost his life. These gendarmes were covered with blood, and almost totally drunk. They plumed themselves on this murder as on a fine feat of arms. They were asked the news. They spoke vaguely of what was passing in Paris, saying that there were wretches who wished to set the Bourbons up instead of the Emperor; that no doubt they had accomplices at Hesdin; that if they could discover them they would have a bad time of it; and that they would lay their bodies open with their swords, as they had served that wretched conscript in the morning.

Wine was brought, and the gendarmes fell to drinking, as if they required any more. M. Cordier said to me quietly, "This is our salvation, let them drink, say nothing, and above all do not stir." He got up, paid the landlord, put to the horse, and sent the servant of the house to tell me he was ready. We got off without its ever entering into the heads of these gendarmes to ask for our passports, or put the smallest question to us. My travelling companion said, "It is a good omen, but perhaps we shall have more than one trial of this kind to experience."

France was then at the height of the crisis, and we met by turns excited conscripts singing the sanguinary hymns of the Revolution, or fugitives from Paris, who were easily recognised by their agitated appearance and the silence they preserved. Through these various scenes we arrived at the gate of Abbeville. We were going to enter it, when a man who was walking along the road stopped our carriage and asked if we knew what was going on in the town. We answered that we did not. Our man resumed, "In that case it is as well to tell you. M. André Dumont, our sub-prefect, has of his own authority put the town into a state of siege; he lets anyone go in that likes, but none go out, and imprisons all whom he suspects of being royalists. It will not last long, for he conceals all the news that comes from Paris; whence I conclude that it is bad, and I am here to try to get hold of some. Can you give me any?" We replied that this confidence on his part called forth the like from us; that we did not come from Paris, but could tell him that the siege of M. André Dumont was approaching its conclusion. We begged him to tell us where we could pass the night safely. He showed us a farm, occupied by worthy people, where we should be received if we said that he had sent us. We went thither, and they really paid us all the duties of hospitality with ancient simplicity. Next morning the son of the house put two good horses to our carriage, and took us across the country, near enough to Amiens for us to suppose we were out of the enemy's country. It was, indeed, then that we first perceived the white cockade.

I could not repress a singular emotion when I saw it. For five-and-twenty years this cockade had been proscribed; it was the enemy's mark, and many great

things had been done in France under the opposite colour, of which we had so long been proud.

At Amiens we found the counter-revolution far advanced. The prefect, M. de la Tour-du-Pin, was working at it willingly, his wife powerfully assisting with her wit and grace. She had converted the department in the twinkling of an eye, and her husband had enough to do to keep a register of the conversions.

When we left the department of the Somme, we came back to the tricoloured cockade, and even heard in some places very inappropriate patriotic songs. The ribands and winning words of Madame de la Tour-du-Pin had not reached so far. As an instance, I may mention that at the post-house at Chantilly we heard very determined wishes against the Provisional Government and the House of Bourbon. After Chantilly we met nothing but soldiers set free by Marshal Marmont's capitulation; they marched in small knots, and preserved a mournful silence. The old conquerors of Europe left the enemy in the midst of Paris, and had not been allowed to die.

We saw none of the enemy's forces till we came down into the plain of Saint Denis; where I saw the Cossacks engaged in demolishing corn-mills and forage. It was a new and painful sensation. The cultivators in the neighbourhood of Paris had sown for them to reap. I had seen some before when they had been brought to Germany by our former wars, but who could then have dared to say that they would trample under foot the soil of France and of the capital of modern civilization. What a dreadful passion is war! Deplorable is the mania for conquest. We had gone as far as Moscow to call forth the Cossacks, and bring them to the banks of the Seine!

CHAPTER V.

Paris—Interview with M. de Talleyrand—Abdication of Napoleon—France under the Conquerors—Correspondence of the Ministry of the Interior—Re-establishment of the Means of Communication—The Duc d'Angoulême—Le Comte d'Artois—Return of the Emigrants—Composition of the Provisional Government*—M. de Vitrolles—M. de Vernon—Reception of *Monsieur* in Paris—*Monsieur's* Speech for the *Moniteur*.

I ARRIVED at Paris saddened by these strange events, and hardly able to account for my feelings. I was going to my own rooms, but found them occupied by Lord Burghersh, who was not inclined to let me have the smallest part of them. He let me know that he was especially attracted by the use of my library. I sought for rooms in the neighbourhood, and, quiet as it is, I could not find any upon any floor.

I sorrowfully exclaimed *Væ victis!* I proceeded to the office, to my old friend M. Benoist, who had taken the seals till I should come. I informed him of my difficulty. He advised me to drive to the Hôtel du Ministère, but he was in doubt whether I could stay there, as everything was disorganised. I accepted the shelter, and left the rest to Providence.

* The Provisional Government met for the first time on the 2nd of April, 1814. It was composed of

M. de Talleyrand, Prince of Benevento;
The Duke of Dalberg;
General Count Beurnonville;
François de Jaucourt;
The Abbé Montesquieu;
Dupont de Nemours held the pen as Secretary.

It was in this first sitting that Count Beugnot was named Commissioner of the Ministry of the Home Department.

I hastened to M. Talleyrand. His house in the Rue Saint Florentin was the strangest casket that could enshrine the destinies of the world. The Emperor of Russia, with his aides-de-camp, occupied the first floor; Count Nesselrode, his Minister of Foreign Affairs, occupied the second with his secretaries. M. Talleyrand had kept the ground-floor for himself, where he was lodged with the Provisional Government. Russian soldiers lined the stairs, Cossacks of the Guard filled the court and street. There was hardly any distinction between day and night. There was the same crowd, the same bustle; no one was quiet there except the Cossacks slumbering on straw.

The ground-floor of Talleyrand's house was no larger than is usual on this floor, in the neighbourhood of the Place Louis XV. It was composed of six rooms; three looked on the Court and three on the Tuileries. The rooms to the Court were left to the public; those looking to the Tuileries were Talleyrand's bed-rooms, when the Provisional Government sat; and in another room the Secretaries of the Government, the Ministers, and all the men in place, who had reports to make or orders to await, worked all together. And, lastly, a library, where M. Talleyrand gave private audience to those who were happy or clever enough to find him there, no easy matter. This portion of the ground-floor was filled from morning to night. In the principal chamber there was a vast deal of agitation. The princes of intrigue succeeded in gliding in and striving with one another to devour this moment's reign. The discussions of the Government were often loud enough, and the doors open, while the only limit to the curiosity of the impatient was that they were not allowed to enter the actual debating room. It was a remarkable scene when M. de Talleyrand endeavoured to pass with his awkward

walk, from his bed-room to his library, to give an audience promised to some one who had been waiting for hours. He had to cross the saloon; he was stopped by one, seized on by another, blockaded by a third, until, wearied out, he returned to the place whence he had started, leaving the unfortunate man, whom he despaired of reaching, to remain in unavailing attendance. But the rooms looking to the Court were occupied in a more strange manner still. The first, serving as an ante-room, was filled by the common herd of intriguers, such as are to be found wherever they are endured, and are certain to form the attendance of a new power. These latter vied with one another in bravado and impudence. They were disputing which had contributed most to the fall of the Corsican, and only allotted a very small share to the Provisional Government. The victory was no sooner gained than they flung themselves on the spoil of the vanquished. M. Laborie, joint-secretary of the Provisional Government, gave private audiences in the third room, being a dressing-room, and he had nearly as much trouble to get there as M. Talleyrand had to his library. So in this house in the Rue Saint Florentin, a high-minded Sovereign, and some statesmen with him, accomplished the great event of the Restoration, amid confusion, disorder, and lawlessness, and jostled by a considerable proportion of the bad company of Paris.

I awaited a favourable moment for an audience of Talleyrand; it was between midnight and two in the morning. I presented myself, and this was our first interview as near as may be.

"You were longer than was expected, how was that?"

"Because communication is not free between Paris and Lille."

"I know nothing of that; are they not pleased with what is done here?"

"They have, as yet, but a very confused idea of what that is, and you must, at any rate, expect a good deal of surprise; indeed I could hardly believe what I saw."

"There was nothing else to do, and so I acted thus."

"You, prince! but did you well weigh the consequences, for . . . ."

"I understand you, my dear Beugnot, but France is too much disordered for anyone to have a right to think of himself. This is exactly how matters came to pass. The Emperor of Russia sent an aide-de-camp to tell me he was coming to my house, and in an hour he was up there. The prince said to me, 'Talleyrand, I wished to come to your house, as you have my confidence and that of my allies. We did not choose to come to any determination before hearing you. You know France, its needs and wishes; say what ought to be done, and we will do it.' I answered, 'Sire, all sorts of people will be in agitation around you; but, permit the expression, neither you nor I are powerful enough to make an intrigue successful, however near the wind it might sail, but we can do anything on a principle. I propose to take up that of legitimacy, which recalls the princes of the house of Bourbon to the throne. These princes will immediately return to a community of interests with the other royal houses of Europe, and they, in their turn, will find a pledge for their stability in the principle that will have preserved that ancient race. With this doctrine, we shall be strong in Paris, in France, in Europe.' The Emperor replied, 'I respect it, and am delighted to hear you profess it; but do you imagine that we shall be able to get the Bourbons received? What I have seen and heard on my journey gives me no hopes. No one thinks of them, or mentions their name anywhere; how

can princes so unknown at present ever satisfy the desires of the French?' 'Will the Emperor allow me to be positive as to the power of a principle, and that the princes of the house of Bourbon will appear as necessary consequences of it; and this will be understood by the whole world.' 'But can you reckon on the consent of the great powers of the state?' 'It will be obtained as soon as your Majesty's opinion is fixed. Let your Majesty announce to-day, in public, that you and your allies will grant neither peace nor truce to Bonaparte; and then, when once the place is clear, we will get the princes of the house of Bourbon recalled by the bodies of the State themselves.' 'But the Senate will never consent?' 'Sire, I undertake that.' 'Very good; you have nearly converted me, you must do as much by the King of Prussia and Prince Schwarzenberg, whom you will find more convinced than I was of the difficulty of restoring the house of Bourbon.'"

M. de Talleyrand added, "I had much difficulty in converting the King of Prussia to my opinion, and more with Schwarzenberg; but at last all the sovereigns are perfectly agreed. The Emperor of Russia remains here, though I have had the palace in the Champs Elysées prepared for him. He wants to be near me and our business. He continues to show confidence in me. Bonaparte is at Fontainebleau; without either dignity or courage. I have sent to demand his abdication, and expect to receive it to-morrow or next day; the newspapers have told you the rest. Now take possession of the Home Office; that is where there is most to be done at present. Write a fine circular to the Prefects, to inform them of the condition of things, and lay down rules for them to go by. Flatter them—for we require it. Support the ancient administration with all your power; it can be improved when the time comes."

I answered M. de Talleyrand that I was honoured by receiving a mission of such importance from his hands, but that I still had some scruples whether it was right to accept it. I pointed out to him that I thought myself bound by my oaths to the Emperor Napoleon till he had abdicated. Anyone but M. de Talleyrand would have taken offence at hearing me put forward scruples which he did not himself hold; but his facility and toleration in such matters were perfect. Besides, it never entered into his head that there could be anything in common between him and me on this point, or any other. He was contented with telling me that he did not know what I meant: that there was no longer an Emperor in France; and that, with all my fine notions, I could do nothing for or against the man who was master of nothing now, not even at Fontainebleau. Besides, he again told me that he should receive the abdication the next day or the day after, and added that meanwhile M. Benoist might go on signing. I departed from this interview quite dazzled by the new light M. de Talleyrand had diffused around me; and I allowed myself to feel that I was nothing more than one of those honest "bourgeois" unfit for serious matters, for they cannot draw a distinction between morality and policy, nor sacrifice one to the other at need.

Bonaparte's abdication did not arrive for two days after this interview. During this time M. Benoist, who had held the seals till my arrival, continued to sign documents. I prepared a note to submit to the Provisional Government on the policy to be impressed on the home department, and prepared the circular suggested by M. de Talleyrand. The Home Office was in the utmost imaginable confusion. An immense fabric, extending over a large portion of Europe, had just collapsed, and there was no knowing oneself among

the ruins. In the part of France occupied by the enemy's armies, the authorities had resigned their situations to nominees of the generals, on whom alone they depended. In the rest of the kingdom, officials were paralysed by the uncertainty, fear, and kind of excitement inseparable from great suspense. Communications were, however, interrupted by the almost entire destruction of the roads on the line of march of the armies. The air was tainted by the great quantity of dead horses which there had been no time to bury, and even human corpses had remained uninterred. Complaints arrived from all sides of the cruel requisitions of the hostile armies. Though a Treaty of Peace had been agreed on at Paris, the work of desolation in the country was not stopped. No doubt perfect credence should not be given to the pictures laid before the Emperor by young clerks transferred from the academical benches to the council of state, among whom there seemed to be an emulation who should exhibit the greatest horrors; but it is true that the enemy committed acts of barbarity unheard of in modern war along their track. The greatest reproach in this respect was due to the troops of the powers of the Confederation of the Rhine, who had long followed our standards; while their plea, that they had been taught the art of devastation in our school, was only an additional insult. I had been in the rear of the victorious French army after the day of Jena, and though some excitement was then caused by the Emperor's bulletins and general orders, exhibiting personal resentment against the House of Prussia, the soldiers did not make any bad use of the right of power against the disarmed populations. Victory does not make France fierce and pitiless; her natural inclination to mirth and kindness is rather developed by it. The guard-room has its wit, and the bivouac its humour; and even there, on

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close observation, may be found the light and cheerful nation, laughing at everything, even danger, and making a joke of everything, even of victory. From such a soldier may heroism be expected—not barbarity, it is not in his nature.

The correspondence that was directed to the Home Office at that time was immense. As soon as a report of a new Government had spread, applications came in from all quarters. During a moment of interregnum a central administration took the place of all authorities. I had hardly time to open the packets and note very briefly how they should be answered. In the course of the first few days I had prepared a portfolio of the most important matters, and attended the Provisional Government to take decisions, but there was no way of getting a minute's audience. In my annoyance I especially watched M. de Talleyrand, but I could only obtain from him those light or piquant replies of which he was a perfect master, in getting rid of the troublesome. Convinced that I could hope for no assistance from the Provisional Government, I held myself as abandoned to my own resources, and resolved to trust to my own head and do my best. I put off all private affairs for calmer times, only considering three essential points: the supply of food to the markets, the health of the country, and the restoration of communication. I was soon at ease on the matter of corn. The harvest had been abundant, and want was hardly felt except on the lines that the armies had followed, from which again must be excepted that followed by the army of the Duke of Wellington in the south. As this general had taken the course of paying ready money for everything, in solid gold, he had attracted such a quantity of provisions to his line of march, that, even with the extraordinary consumption occasioned by his passing, food declined in price. I

caused a statement to be prepared of the price of food throughout the kingdom, in the month of May, 1814, with notes to explain it, and subsequently forwarded it to Louis XVIII., to show him the secret by which an army may live in abundance in an enemy's country; and I have reason to think that his majesty did not forget it, as he made use of the method, in the war in Spain, with equal success. I was only in some difficulty to find oats for the forty thousand horses that were collected at Paris. I called to my assistance, in all matters relating to subsistence, M. Vaulerbergne, a most estimable and able merchant. I had seen him render great services to the Emperor, for which, as usual, he had been very ill paid, and he was the more anxious to assist me because I had been counsel for him at a time when, though he was right, it required some courage to undertake his defence. M. Vaulerbergne wrote a tender on my own desk, and I accepted it; and from that moment there was no more question of subsistence, and oats became so plentiful at Paris that the price was only a little raised for the first month, and sank to its usual pitch in the course of the next. At the same time I applied to the Health Committee to inform me of the safest means of purifying the French land from the infection of the dead bodies; and, as soon as I got their answer, I sent off commissioners by the mails, with orders not to lose a moment in destroying these mournful and dangerous relics of the furies of war. I had the satisfaction of being served as I would wish.

Then I attended to the provisional restoration of communication. The requirements of the post seemed the most urgent to me, and I thought that it was a debt that would have to be paid in more than one year; but the most pressing necessities had to be provided for,

and an attempt made to restore some sort of communication over the broken bridges and torn-up roads. The local authorities threw themselves into this zealously, but their efforts, directed by the engineers of roads and bridges, did not quite succeed in re-establishing communication, though they made success probable. Then I had to provide for an important matter: the requisitions of all kinds that were raised in different places, to provide for the needs of the hostile troops, now become allies, requisitions no less extensive or painful to meet under the latter name than the former. There was nothing for the Home Office to order or direct, for there was no basis to rely on; all was left to the armed arbitration. I limited my endeavours to issuing a circular, in which I pointed out what measures seemed to me suitable for the distribution of this expense of war in proper proportions among the owners of property, and what precautions must be taken to vouch for the capital of the sums advanced, as they would have some time to be repaid. Then I renewed the correspondence with the prefects. I quickly dispatched whatever it was possible to complete, and tried to diffuse generally the hopes with which I felt myself animated; and I wish to record it here, to the honour of the administrators among whom I long held a place. In this moment of extremity, when half France was conquered or laid waste—in this difficult and painful change from the Imperial Government to that of the House of Bourbon—patriotism inspired all the prefects to efforts of courage, constancy, and, at need, of intrepidity. These administrators had been formed in an excellent school, of which nothing has yet taken the place. So, during the short time that I held the seals of the Ministry of the Interior, I struggled against the dismissals I was required to send out, even by members of the government. I was un-

willing to connect my name with the commencement of that bad system that has only been too much followed. I only filled up the places of two prefects, who had explicitly sent in their resignations, and did so cautiously, after ascertaining that they had no desire to return to office. Such was the course I persistently followed during the short interval that I held the seals of the Ministry of the Interior. I knew that at most I should only have time to prepare the way for the person who should be conclusively appointed Minister, for I never imagined it would concern me. I could only have adduced some experience and power of work; and the seals of that office were already destined for a man of high name, most agreeable exterior, and such perfect ignorance of business that Heaven knows how affairs were conducted.

I had given up the notion of consulting the Provisional Government about anything that required a decision, but I went to M. de Talleyrand after midnight —for that was the only moment in the twenty-four hours to catch him. He came down from the Emperor of Russia's apartments, where he had been diligently playing his part with all the powers of Europe, in dealing with the march of events. There was nothing written there, any more than with the Emperor of Germany or with the Provisional Government. The fate of the world was tossed about in conversations or private interviews of M. de Talleyrand with each of the sovereigns, and especially with the Emperor of Russia, who continued to throw himself entirely into his hands. M. de Talleyrand had managed, with his well known ability, often to give this insensible direction, because all his advantage lay there. But difficulties soon began. I wish to point out their origin in detail, for it will give a cause for the position of France subsequent to 1814; a singular

situation, when two classes of Frenchmen, together on the same soil, under the same laws, were unable to unite, or even to agree.

The enemies of the Bourbons have said over and over again, and still say, that these princes returned, in 1814, along *with the foreigners' baggage*, according to the general expression. So little was it the case that they returned in this miserable manner, that the Duke of Wellington refused to see the Duke d'Angoulême at Bordeaux, when he had thrown himself into that city, with more courage than prudence; and when the magistrates consulted the English general on the line of conduct they ought to adopt towards the prince, the Duke of Wellington replied that he did not think it prudent to make any venture with the Duke d'Angoulême, while negotiations were still going on at Chatillon with the plenipotentiaries of the Emperor Napoleon. At the same time Monsieur was passing timidly through the towns of Lorraine, even more anxious to avoid the Austrian generals than the officials of the country. He was very far from making any application to the foreign powers for support, and would not have been successful had he done so. He had taken refuge at Vesoul, where he was visited by a few gentlemen of the neighbourhood, and avoided by the larger number. The Emperor of Russia declared, in a proclamation on the 31st of March, that the sovereigns would only recognise and guarantee such constitution as the French nation should itself constitute; and in reply to a deputation of the Senate, on the 2nd of April following, the same prince thus expressed himself: "It is wise and just to give strong and liberal institutions to France, in agreement with existing lights; my allies and I only come to secure the liberty of your decisions." It was not till four days later, when the Senate had, in the exercise of

its constitutional powers, called Louis Xavier of France to the throne, that these princes were recognised in the places where they chanced to be. Before that time they had passed an unknown and hazardous existence, though France was covered with two hundred thousand foreigners. I was then sufficiently informed of the councils of the foreign princes. During my stay in Germany, I had enjoyed opportunities of personal acquaintance with some of their chief ministers. I had possessed better means than any of thoroughly knowing the dispositions of the courts, and I feel quite certain that, if the Senate had called a different family from that of the Bourbons to the throne of France, it would have been accepted by Europe, I will not say without hesitation, but with a kind of complaisance, so much prejudice was there in the minds of the sovereigns, and so great was the influence of that prediction of Alexander, that the princes of the house of Bourbon would find great difficulties in their establishment in France. What took place at Bordeaux does not at all detract from these assertions, for the enthusiasm of the Bordelais was entirely founded on their accumulated wine-casks, and they would have welcomed not only the Duke of Angoulême, but any prince who brought with him peace and the means to dispose of the produce of five vintages under which they were crushed.

When once the provisional constitution that was devised by the Senate had been published, Monsieur could no longer retain in France the undefined condition in which he had before lived. The Provisional Government feared the growth of some authority around the prince to rival its own, and took the step of sending to inform him of the Constitution devised by the Senate, and of inviting him to come and take his place at the head of the government. There were deliberations on the title the prince should take, and precedents appli-

cable to the situation pointed to that of Lieutenant-General of the Kingdom.

To this first message to Monsieur, and to that prince's first step in the business of the country, must be traced the source of his constant opposition to the government granted to France by his brother.

The Count d'Artois had left Versailles in the month of July, 1789, and at once declared an implacable opposition to the Revolution. His example, his advice, and his appeals were the moving springs of emigration. He was reigning, and, through a chance, in the unhappy flight to Varennes, he was joined by the Count de Provence, to whom primogeniture gave the superior rights, but the Count d'Artois was in possession of the higher post, for he was quite clear of any contact with the Revolution. A man of brilliant qualities, and, though somewhat volatile, a true French Chevalier in heart and manners, he was more in sympathy with the feelings of the emigrants than his brother. The elder was blamed for his taste for study, his philosophy, and for not having shown as much opposition as he ought to the opinions that ruled in France. So the Count of Provence received the marks of respect that could not be denied to his rank, but credit, confidence, and real supremacy remained to the Count d'Artois. Thence arose a leaven of jealousy between the two brothers, that soon degenerated into a real division. The two brothers did not look at their interests with the same eye, either abroad or in France, and even after the Count of Provence had claimed the crown, under the name of Louis XVIII., the Count d'Artois, having attained the rank of "Monsieur," no less preserved a kind of influence, of which the King approved neither the principle nor the method. So, if the partisans of Monsieur were often imprisoned, tried, and condemned, while nothing of the sort happened to

those of Louis XVIII., it was because they received very different missions. The former were ordered to act at any price, and by all means, the latter to make observations with great circumspection. It was not difficult for the Emperor to lay hands on the first; he hardly suspected the existence of the second.

By the month of April, 1814, at the time of the Restoration, the greater number of the emigrants had returned. Those who had no means of fortune had thrown themselves on the official employments which the Emperor offered them; those who belonged to families that the Revolution had shaken, without being able to destroy, returned to their homes, and lived in retirement, but faithful to their respect for the ancient loyalty. A considerable number, weary of this barren worship, had even plunged into the court or army of the Emperor. They made great pretence of devotion there; but once at home, they were in bonds of relationship and friendship that they could not break, and the ancient nobleman, with his recollections, his regrets, and even his language, was reproduced beneath the chamberlain's uniform or the general's epaulettes. And there were scamps, too, among the emigrants, men still young, formed, by the adventurer's life they had long led, for whom all commotions were lucky chances, and who only returned to France to stir up disturbances and live on them. Among these were recruited the bands that laid waste Brittany and Lower Normandy for such a length of time, and put really serious crimes under the protection of the royal cause, for which they said they were in arms. Continual external wars, a formidable police at home, and the general sense of the necessity of order, had put an end to these excesses, but the instruments of them were not all destroyed. Afterwards, the vast glory of the Emperor, his ascendancy, so long irresistible within as

well as without, was powerful enough to repress adverse sentiments even in the secresy of private life, but they were always preserved there, and proof appeared with fortune's first infidelities.

These sentiments burst forth at the moment of the Restoration. The party of the emigrants, and generally the Royalist party, were sorry to see that the honour of recalling the Bourbons had fallen to the lot of men who, with one exception only, had grown old in the service of the Revolution or the Emperor. In reality, the Abbé de Montesquieu was the only exception, and he served less like a real fellow-labourer than a spectator, devoted from his earliest infancy, even up to these later days, to the prince whose return was in question. I may here quote a conversation I had with the Countess Charles de Damas. She said to me, "You remember I maintained, in 1794, that it was a great misfortune that Robespierre had fallen under the blows of his friends, because his system remained. Well, now, allowing for the great difference between men and things, I maintain that it is a misfortune that the House of Bourbon is recalled by the men of the Revolution, for their system will still remain." "But," I replied, "these men are much chastened." "We shall see; but if I see it, I shall not die without witnessing a miracle."

However, the wiser portion of the Royalists, and especially those who had taken their tone from the Emperor, made no objections to the composition of the Provisional Government; they only expressed some regret at not seeing the names of some personages of their party. But the ardent portion soon tried to raise altar against altar, in their resentment at having been attracted when it seemed likely that they would be wanted, and then repulsed when the Provisional Government, having received the Emperor's abdication, thought the services of

men of that stamp could no longer be useful, and might become dangerous. In reality, during the earlier days of April, when the amount of resistance that would be experienced from the Emperor and his partizans in the capital was uncertain, some adventurers had been received, and even encouraged, by the Provisional Government, who vied with one another in proposing prodigies. M. de Talleyrand allowed some to talk without saying a word, and from the attention that he seemed to pay to them, he sent them away convinced of his approval. He gave to others some of those signs or involved sayings of which he was a master in making dupes without compromising himself, and most likely it was something of the kind he let fall to the Marquis de Manbreuil, and which was taken for encouragement. Though Manbreuil has told it to me a thousand times, and lost his head by the continual repetition of it, I do not think that M. de Talleyrand was guilty of so wickedly inciting him. Manbreuil passed before him, just as so many of the same sort. It is a fact I have no doubt of, since it is attested by my informant. M. de Talleyrand could not have paid any more attention to him than to anyone else, when hearing the most extravagant proposals, which, from his silence, Manbreuil must have thought were approved. At the same time that I consider M. de Talleyrand innocent of stirring him up, I think him very capable of not having recalled Manbreuil to principles of morality and honour, and of leaving him to his evil genius, for, when closely examined, the blackest success of this genius was what put M. de Talleyrand more at his ease.

I can give an anecdote to show the more plainly how M. de Talleyrand, in the midst of the most serious business, would make the persons who came near him con-

tributé to his own pleasures. The day on which the Provisional Government was formed, the Archbishop of Malines appeared before M. de Talleyrand, and showing some surprise that such a piece of machinery had been established without a place having been reserved for him in it, angrily inquired of the Prince what they proposed to do with him, for they could not leave him out at such a time. "Well, and who wants to leave you out?" said the Prince. "You can perform a most notable service at this very moment—have you got a white handkerchief?" "Yes." "Very white?" "Yes, indeed." "Well, show it me." The Archbishop drew his handkerchief from his pocket. M. de Talleyrand took it, and holding it by one corner, made a kind of banner of it, brandishing it all round, with shouts of "Vive le Roi!" "You see that; now go out into the Boulevard de la Madeleine, and follow it to the Faubourg St. Antoine, waving your handkerchief all the way, and crying, Long live the King!" "But, Prince, you do not consider; think of my dress; I have on my ecclesiastical robes, and my cross and my order of the Legion of Honour." "That is just the thing; if you were not so dressed, you would have to go and put them on; your ecclesiastical cross, your toupet, and powdered tonsure, will cause scandal, and that is just what we want." Who could believe it? The author of so many works, and some remarkable ones among them, one of the men who had most sense in France, M. de Pradt, came down Talleyrand's stairs, to go and play this mummery. At first it succeeded well enough. He went along the boulevards, doing as had been suggested, and had, as was natural, picked up a considerable throng of rogues and curious persons, but when he came to the Boulevard Poissonnière, he came upon a stratum of Bonapartists, who charged the Archbishop and his train, and compelled him to retrace his steps. Jostled in his

retreat, he was obliged to return his standard into his pocket, and throw himself into the by-streets, running as hard as he could back to head-quarters, in the Rue Saint-Florentin, where he arrived out of breath, and up to his eyes in dirt. The scandal could not be more perfect or more amusing. The Archbishop, faithful to his character, emphatically enlarged on his audacity and success. He related that he had, after all, won over a notable portion of the capital to the royal cause. Even if he had not gone beyond the Faubourg Poissonnière, it had really been an excess of boldness on his part to undertake alone an adventure which no one else would have attempted without some well-mounted squadrons. Besides, he had not run away, and by his defiant bearing towards the mob he had shown that nothing would frighten him, the menacing looks of Bonaparte no more than the *civium ardor prava jubentium*. And M. de Talleyrand coolly heard him out, and answered, "It is just as I told you; so dressed, you could not fail to make a wonderful effect."

The Provisional Government had no time to lose, and they did not lose any; on the 3rd of April the Senate had pronounced the Emperor's forfeiture. The Constitution which was to replace his Government had been published on the 7th, and, on the same day, the Government had sent to Monsieur, a confidential person, to hasten his return. The choice had fallen on M. de Vitrolles. This gentleman has much good sense and delicate discernment, and is remarkable for the charm he diffuses through all intercourse. Much inclined to combinations, and with vigour enough to carry them through, he conceals them under the polish of manner and the courtesy and small talk of good society. M. de Talleyrand had allowed himself to be caught by these admirable qualities, and had not the least doubt

that M. de Vitrolles would punctually follow the instructions he had given, and would prove as complaisant as any other messenger. His surprise was extreme on reading the first despatch from him, containing a report of the audience that M. de Vitrolles had obtained from the Prince, who was reported to have laid before him a startling picture of the evils of all kinds that he had witnessed, and to have insisted on the necessity of quickly finding a remedy for them. Monsieur thought that these things ought to be attended to, rather than the formation of a Constitution of which he had never heard any one speak, and of which there would be time to think when France should have recovered her independence and tranquillity. The letter was full of matter, and peculiar in style. When it was read I was rejoiced at the progress made by the Count d'Artois not only in politics, but in the art of writing, and added that misfortune was a great teacher. M. de Talleyrand was considering who could be the author of this production, not attributing it to M. de Vitrolles, and still less to Monsieur. I had had occasion to know the former in Germany, and knew the extent of his capacity. So it was not difficult to me to convince M. de Talleyrand who was the author of the letter, and from that time M. de Talleyrand set a mark against him in his mind, as a man of whom he might make use, and yet as a possible enemy. This disposition in Monsieur afterwards bore curious fruits. M. de Vitrolles thought that there was a place to be taken beside the Count d'Artois, which M. de Talleyrand could never fill, that of an emigrant who was a man of sense, not a usual thing, as well as a declared enemy of the Revolution, dreaming of the return of a large portion of the old Government as practicable, and fertile in expedients for that object, or, at least, tending to it. This place was easily taken by M. de Vitrolles, who nearly

fulfilled these conditions, and it is due to him to say that he occupied it with rare fidelity, amid dangers of more than one kind, and sometimes at the peril of liberty, and even life.

This first letter was followed by a second, much shorter, which announced the arrival of Monsieur for the 12th. There was a meeting on the evening of the 11th, to arrange the next day's ceremonial. The Emperor's great machine for magnificence was out of order; there was not a horse left in the stable, and the National Guard were the only troops we could display. It was settled that the expression of public delight should be the whole expense of the entrance, and that the observance of good order should be left to the hearts of the spectators. But a charger was a matter of necessity for the person who occupied the King's place, and no one knew where to find one; and I must here remark how a chance word will sometimes make a fortune. M. de Talleyrand declared that it was my place, as having breeding studs in my department, to find the horse so much required. I defended myself against the joke, lest it might become earnest, and added my regrets at not having at hand a M. de Vernon whom I had formerly known, and who would be just the man to get us out of the difficulty. "What Vernon?" asked M. de Talleyrand. "Why, a M. de Vernon whom I knew as equerry to Madame Elisabeth, and who was attentive to the Marchioness de Brisay, both of whom we had seen at Brienne." "That is the very thing, we only want to dig up your M. de Vernon. Nothing can be easier, by making inquiries among the family of Madame de Brisay." Two hours later the equerry was at my office; he undertook the commission, and performed it to perfection, so very well, indeed, that having once come into notice, he has never ceased to manage the King's stables, and

thus, at the close of his career, obtained honour and profit he could not have dreamed of at its outset. Besides, to do him justice, he was considered to maintain excellent order in his department; and that his family might be equally well ordered, in his seventy-sixth year, he decided upon marrying Madame de Brisay, who, though no less than seventy, was restored to such youthfulness by achieving a legitimate marriage, that, though it took place quite eight or ten years ago, she may be still seen, ever upright and active, at balls, soirées, and charity sermons. And just see how the world goes! Very probably nothing of the sort would have happened if it had not been imposed on me as a kind of joke to find a horse for Monsieur's entrance, and had not this name of Vernon remained lodged for some thirty or forty years in one of the corners of my memory, and been extracted by a moment of difficulty.

Next day, the 12th of April, a procession was formed to meet the King's brother. The weather was splendid. It was one of the earliest days of Spring, delightful at the temperature of Paris, when the sun shines with full splendour, and only imparts a soothing warmth to the still tender buds everywhere springing up. Some half-opened flowers, the soft green that began to dawn on the trees, the song of the birds of Spring, the joyful expression on all countenances, and the tune of "Henri le Bon," which gave the time to the march, marked this entrance as the feast of hope. No great order was observed, but some tears were shed. As soon as Monsieur was seen, M. de Talleyrand went to meet him, and leaning on the Prince's horse, with the easy grace excused by the weakness of his legs, he paid him a compliment in four lines stamped with the mark of exquisite sensibility. Monsieur, feeling that he was thronged on

by Frenchmen on all sides, was too much moved to be able to answer, and only said, in a voice stifled by sighs, "Sir, and gentlemen, I thank you; I am too happy. Let us get on, I am too happy." We afterwards heard the same prince reply with presence of mind and felicity to the harangues addressed to him; but to those who saw and heard him at his entrance into Paris, he was never so eloquent as that day. The procession then started for Notre-Dame, according to the ancient custom of the French, to lay first before the throne of Heaven their solemn homage for any happy event. The National Guard composed the main body of the procession, but it was also made up of Russian, Prussian, Austrian, Spanish, and Portuguese officers, at whose head Monsieur appeared like an angel of peace in the midst of the European family. From the gate of Bondy to the area of Notre-Dame there was not a window unoccupied by faces glowing with joy. The people in the streets sent their applause and shouts after the Prince. He could hardly get on amid the general intoxication, and he replied to one who would have freed him from those pleasant trammels, "Let them alone, sir, let them alone, any way I shall get there too soon." So the Prince was carried, if the expression may be used, to Notre-Dame upon the hearts of the French, and at his entry into the sanctuary, when he prostrated himself at the foot of the altar that had for so many centuries received the prayers of his ancestors, a bright ray of light struck on his face, and impressed something celestial on it. He prayed fervently, and all prayed with him. Tears moistened our eyes, and even those of the foreigners. Oh, with what truth and ardour was each verse of the hymn of thankfulness sent up to the skies! At the conclusion of the ceremonies some old servants of Monsieur, who had lamented his absence for thirty years, embraced his

knees, and he raised them with the touching heartfelt grace so natural to him. The return from Notre-Dame to the Tuileries was no less animated or happy, and when he reached the court of the palace Monsieur got off his horse and made an address to the National Guard, perfectly suitable to his situation. He shook hands with several officers and soldiers, begged them to remember this fair day, and protested he should never forget it himself. I caused the palace gates to be opened for the Prince, and had the honour of conducting him to the wing he was to occupy. I asked his orders for the rest of the day, and at what time I should present myself in the morning. The Prince seemed to hesitate whether he should let me go or not. I thought I saw that it was out of kindness, and I told him that I feared to take up a minute more of his time, for I thought he was tired; and it was to me that he replied "How can you think me tired? It is the only day of happiness I have tasted for thirty years. Oh, Monsieur, what a glorious day! Say that I am happy and delighted with everyone. These are my orders for to-day. To-morrow at nine in the morning.

When I left the Prince I went to my usual work, and remained at it till eleven at night, when I went to M. de Talleyrand. I found him conversing over the day with Pasquier, Dupont de Nemours, and Anglès. They were agreed in thinking it perfect. M. de Talleyrand remembered that there ought to be an article in the *Moniteur;* Dupont offered to write it. "Not at all," replied M. de Talleyrand, "you would make it poetical, I know you; Beugnot can manage that; let him go into the library, and speedily serve up an article for us to send to Sauvo." I undertook the not very difficult task, but when I came to Monsieur's answer to M. de Talleyrand I was puzzled. Words that spring from deep

feeling produce an effect by the tone in which they are uttered, and from the presence of the objects that have called them forth; but when they have to be put down on paper, without these surroundings, they become cold, and it is well if they are not ridiculous. I returned to M. de Talleyrand, and informed him of the difficulty. "Let us see," he said, "what did Monsieur say? I did not hear much; he seemed much moved, and very desirous of hastening on; but if what he did say will not suit you make an answer for him." "But how can I make a speech he never uttered?" "That is not the difficulty, make it good and suitable to the person, and I can answer for it that Monsieur will accept it, and that so thoroughly that by the end of a couple of days he will believe he made it; and he will have made it—you will count for nothing." "Very good." I went back, tried one version, and brought it to be criticised. M. de Talleyrand said, "That will not do, Monsieur never makes antitheses and does not indulge in the smallest flower of rhetoric. Be brief and simple, and say what suits best with the speaker and hearers, that is all." M. Pasquier said, "It seems to me that what many men's minds are disturbed with is a fear of the changes that must be occasioned by the return of the princes of the House of Bourbon; perhaps this point may be touched, but delicately." "Good, I advise it," said M. de Talleyrand. I tried a fresh version, and was sent back again, for I had been too long, and the style was stilted. At last I was delivered of what stands in the *Moniteur*, where I make Monsieur say, "No more divisions! Peace and France! At last I see her once more, and nothing in her is changed, except that here is one more Frenchman!" At last the great critic said, "This time I yield, that is really Monsieur's speech; and I will answer for

you that he is the man who made it; you may be easy now." And, indeed, the speech was fortunate; the papers seized on it as a happy hit; it was also reproduced as an engagement taken by the Prince, and the words, "one more Frenchman," became the regular catchword of the harangues that showered in from all quarters. Monsieur did not disdain to refer to it in his replies, and the prophecy of M. de Talleyrand was completely realised.

CHAPTER VI.

The Comte d'Artois—The Royal Treasure and the Crown Diamonds—*Douches Morales* to M. Louis—Robbery of the Queen of Westphalia—The Bailli de Crussol—Mission of M. de Liancourt—Return of Louis XVIII.—Presentation of the Institute to the Emperor of Russia—Interview of M. de Talleyrand with the King—Portrait of Louis XVIII.—His Manner of Working with his Ministers—Appointed Director-General of Police—The Police of the Pavillon Marsan.

NEXT morning I went to the Tuileries. The Prince received me, not graciously—that would be too little to say—but with a touching cordiality. His features, bearing, and gestures were all animated, become younger and embellished by the sense of happiness. I recognised the Count d'Artois, whom I had in my youth admired from a distance as a lofty model of elegance and grace. This remembrance of the fair days of my youth, this private interview, of which I should never then have dreamed, affected me to tears. I had felt nothing of the sort with Napoleon. He was not the son of Saint Louis. His genius impressed me; but all the memories and studies of my life, all the reverence of my youth, had not attached me to his race. His words were more than those of France, but not the words of that old France from whom the men of my age had never been turned. My emotion did not escape the Prince. he took both my hands and pressed them, saying, "I can clearly see that I can depend on you, and you may depend on me. Do you know, M. Beugnot, that I have just done what I had never done before in my life? Guess

what it was, come guess." "If not in fear of committing a fault by excessive boldness, I should guess a bad action." "No, heaven be thanked! but I have been all over the Tuileries. Can you fancy it? That is the way we were brought up. There are a number of beautiful things at Paris I do not in the least know; but wait a little, I promise you I will make acquaintance with them." Monsieur was well inclined to be pleased with everything; but he was struck when he saw how much had been made of the Tuileries, the beauty of the Place du Carrousel and of the Garden. "Can you imagine that I have heard a hundred times people saying at Versailles that there was nothing to be made of the Tuileries, and that it was made up of a lot of garrets? And here are convenient and magnificent apartments. What! It was an officer of Bonaparte's court that occupied the rooms where we now are? It is incredible." "It was really the case; but I would beg your royal highness to permit me to add, that this officer was the only one who was lodged in the mansion."

I had some matters of detail to communicate to the Prince, and some signatures to ask of him. He listened to me attentively, and said nothing but what was just and well put, showing confidence in me, and I left him perfectly satisfied. But two days later I saw that some persons around Monsieur were already acting on him, and giving his mind a dangerous direction. He began to be impressed with prejudices against particular persons. These I endeavoured to dissipate, generally without success.

These same men had already cast in their lot together and rallied round Monsieur. What they wanted was especially money, and they exhibited a marvellous ardour in devising the means of procuring it. The Court of

Napoleon, on its progress to Blois, had taken the useful precaution of carrying with it the diamonds and some precious properties of the Crown, and the residue of the treasure, amounting to three hundred and twenty thousand pounds. One of the first cares of the Provisional Government was to send a commissioner after the convoy, with orders to reclaim it; and he had been provided with the means of overcoming resistance if necessary. The choice had fallen on M. Dudon, a counsellor of state, a man of sense, courage, and resolution. He had no need to use all the means at his disposal in order to persuade M. Mollier and M. de la Bouillerie, who were in charge, to return the Crown diamonds and the money of the Treasury. These two persons, who were rivals in delicacy and gentleness, gave up what was required of them, and only made such difficulties, for form's sake, as were imposed on them by their position and the responsibility that weighed on them. But the band of zealots desired to estreat so easy and natural a resource. They proceeded to Blois in all haste, and, in despair at seeing that the business was all settled without a blow being struck, they constituted themselves, against the will of the Government Commissioner, an escort to the convoy. They brought it straight to the Pavillon Marsan, and put money and diamonds into the hands of the King's brother. This destination was not what the Government had desired. The Finance Minister was counting the hours till the arrival of the convoy, so urgent were the needs of the service. The Court of Blois had cleaned out the Treasury, and all the offices, and they had been reduced to have recourse to the contractor for the tax on theatres to provide for the expenses that could not be deferred for an hour, and he had consented to advance some thousands of pounds. I had seen an equally severe distress on the 18th

Brumaire, and long before at the retirement of the Archbishop of Sens.

When the Provisional Minister of Finance heard that the treasure had arrived at the Tuileries, he gave an order for its restoration to its proper place, and was very far from thinking that there would be any difficulty about it. The answer was given him that nothing of the sort would be done, that the money was a fair prize, for it had been taken by a party of royalists from the Bonaparte family when escaping, and they had laid it at the feet of the King's brother, who would employ it for his most pressing needs. To understand the fury of M. Louis, the extremities to which the Government were reduced to meet the smallest expense must be known, as well as all the hastiness in the character of this minister. He frightened us all, and if he had not been stopped would have run to the Tuileries and extracted by fair means or foul the three hundred and twenty thousand pounds that were placed there, told the King's brother all he thought of it, and if he did not succeed in his storming party, send in his resignation and publish the reason why. We had immense trouble in making him understand that, however vexatious was such a reply, there was nothing surprising in it at a moment of disorder, that it was a matter to go straight to the King's brother about, and especially with politeness, as he would not defend the work of those about him. After having given what I may well call these moral cold baths to M. Louis, we allowed him to go to the Tuileries, with some anxiety for the results of his expedition. He was successful, for Monsieur, as soon as he had a real notion of the matter, ordered the return of the money to the Treasury. Only with the Minister's consent he kept eighty thousand pounds for his personal expenses, the right being reserved to charge it on the

first sums that should be regularly at the King's command.

It was at the same time, and by the same kind of confederates, that the Queen of Westphalia was stopped on the highway, and robbed of her diamonds and money, with incredible brutality. This unhappy Princess could have pointed out, among those who so treated her, men who had formerly composed her court. As had been the case with the crown diamonds and the treasury money, this new capture was conveyed to the Pavillon Marsan; but those who did this, more reckless in their proceedings than the treasure escort, or warned by the experience of the latter, only left boxes and travelling trunks at the Tuileries, with all the valuables carefully taken out, and with gold money replaced by silver. Yet, thanks to an operation performed on the journey, by a seduced or willing artist, the locks seemed untouched; and besides, they had taken the precaution of having vouchers for the receipt of the boxes at the Tuileries. By the combination of these methods, the emptying of these boxes would be laid to the charge of Monsieur's household, the moment it was found out. The discovery could not be long deferred, and gave scope for false accusations audaciously sustained, for odious recriminations, and for the manœuvres that such wretches are capable of, when, in preparing for a robbery, they have made provision for their defence beforehand.

The members of the Provisional Government could not see without pain such events take place so near Monsieur, and the tone of the men who had the honour to be near him thus displayed. I was desired to say a word to him on the matter. I did it with much caution, but not much success. Monsieur was not naturally disposed to believe in evil, and easily allowed himself to be captivated by the appearances of an entire devotion.

Fallen into the midst of France, and no longer having a knowledge of it, unable to look at anything but faces, dresses, and decorations that ceaselessly recalled to him a party that had been so long hostile, it was a lucky chance for him to be sometimes able to collect within his home what he took to be the remains of the royalist party. The tricksters who ingratiated themselves were skilful at pretence; they explained the forgetfulness, or rather scorn, of the past government for their services by their fidelity through every trial; some severe and just measures that they had suffered they called persecution, and by always boasting of their loyalty and devotion to the altar and the throne, they easily captivated Monsieur with the affectation of virtues of which he himself was a sincere and perfect model. Besides, I made the remark, as has been only too clearly proved before, that when once this Prince had conceived an affection for anyone, it was extremely difficult to detach him. For him friendship was a deceitful present, with colours that never faded; an unfortunate failing in princes, from which Providence had preserved those of the House of Bourbon before him.

Before the Restoration, I had known the Bailli of Crussol, a man of spirit and sense, a Frenchman of the old stock, but yielding to the necessities of the moment whenever honour was not in opposition, and as good a judge of it as any man in France. I knew that he had been about the Count d'Artois from the Prince's youth. I supposed, therefore, that he must still be in his closest confidence, and I went to confide to him my sorrow at the kind of men who crowded the Pavillon Marsan. The Bailli answered me—"Good heavens, who am I that you tell it to; our weakness in that line is not a yesterday's matter; I fought against it five-and-forty years ago; trust me, make the King come, make him come as

soon as possible; he will not allow the bread he is eating to be taken from his hand; not one of the fellows you speak of would dare to appear a second time before him. The King will take the government, and you may be very easy; he will not leave his brother anything he can take from him. During that time our Prince, who is the best man in the world, will have time to know himself; everybody about him will take his own place, and we will always endeavour to moderate his old taste for advance, and for the men who favour that taste." I reported this conversation to M. de Talleyrand, and he replied that he so fully shared the opinion of M. de Crussol, that he had already sent off the Duke de Liancourt to Hartwell. I asked Talleyrand if he had well considered, and if M. de Liancourt was really fit for such a mission. I recalled the faults the royalist party imputed to him, and those that the Princes, perhaps, had a right to accuse him of. Talleyrand replied, "I know all that better than you do, but it is not necessary that a trace of it should remain in the King's mind, and it is just to make the forgetfulness clear that I chose the Duke de Liancourt; he is a man of that country, he is charitable to everyone there; he is sent to do good to the King, and I protest to you that he will be well received. What is past is gone; nature has not given men eyes behind them, we must look to those before, and we shall have quite enough to do." "And yet, if M. de Liancourt should find difficulty in getting access to the King? For all are agreed that he is under the yoke of a M. de Blacas, who lets no one approach who does not suit him." "Who is this Blacas? I do not know where he comes from, and care little enough to know. We are going to enter on a constitutional government, where influence will be proportioned to capacity. Men will, for the future, have to take their place by public speaking and

business, and anyone that likes may take the trouble of watching the moment of the King's rising, and emptying his pockets when he goes to bed."

M. de Liancourt had indeed gone, and sharing in Talleyrand's illusion, he thought he was going to resume without difficulty the exercise of his ancient post of master of the robes to the King. Both had notably reckoned without their host. M. de Liancourt did not see the King, only M. de Blacas, who dismissed him with the chilling politeness that never fails him. By chance I met M. de Liancourt on his return, and I asked him how he had been received. He answered, "Very badly, or, to speak more correctly, not at all. There is a certain M. de Blacas there, who guards the approaches, and you may well conceive I did not demean myself by a contest with him. I am afraid M. de Talleyrand has fallen into a snare; the Princes are going to return to us just the same as when they went away."

The King was soon announced to us. Business hurried on so rapidly, that the want of success of M. de Liancourt could hardly attract attention. And yet it must have occasioned much thought to M. de Talleyrand, for he spoke to no one of it.

From the time I have spoken of till the King's arrival, the whole period was occupied by grave and pressing occupations; the King's return, the departure of the Sovereign Pontiff for his states, our solicitude to keep the army to its colours, and to quarter the foreign armies, so as to prevent collision between them, the speedy repair of those disasters of the war that compromised the public health or the ease of communication; the part to be taken with respect to those numerous unforeseen interests that arise when an ancient order of things is superseded by a new one; and, finally, the

ordinary work of the administration, which had to be kept up day and night, amid so many obstacles, at the risk of falling into disorder in some department. It is true that the task of the Provisional Government was rendered less difficult by the spirit which prevailed in Paris and the departments. Whatever may be said, there had been a general consent to the return of the Bourbons, founded on deep affection and noble memories. Whoever reads the addresses and discourses intended for them will be convinced of this. They were not composed of those conventional phrases of adulation by which power of any sort is flattered, such as are to be found in those numerous addresses which occupy a large portion of the *Moniteur* from 1789. There is something sincere and touching in the language of the early days of the Restoration, like that of children who, after being lost in a storm, find themselves again in the bosom of their family. The replies of the Princes preserve the same tone. This epoch is inspired by all that is best and most elevated in the old French character. The army alone kept alive its pain and regret, for its defeat was outrage.

I may give as an instance the first address of the Senate, which was presented to the King's brother on the 15th of April. I was at Monsieur's side, and at that point of his reply when he said that the King and the Princes of his family were ready to sacrifice their blood for the happiness of the French, that there ought to be but one feeling among them, and that, forgetting the past, they should henceforward be a nation of brothers, the Count de Ségur, one of the Senators, burst into tears, and exclaimed, "Oh! this is a true son of Henry IV," to which Monsieur happily replied, "Yes, the blood of Henry IV. flows in my veins. I regret that I do not possess his talents, but I am very sure I have his heart, and his love for the French." This scene was one of genuine emotion on

both sides, for it is impossible to imagine that it was concerted between the former Count d'Artois, and the new master of the ceremonies under the Emperor.

I must also speak of another presentation that was very interesting to me; that of the Institute to the Emperor of Russia. M. Suard had requested me to prepare the way to this honour for the Institute, and to explain to the Emperor that the ancient French Academy formed the second class of that learned body. I was invited to dine with the Emperor on the day that His Majesty had appointed. This Sovereign of so many men and countries, who was at Paris at the head of a hundred thousand soldiers, was not a little embarrassed at the part he had to play before the Institute, at the head of which was the younger M. Lacretelle. He seriously thought that his reputation was in some measure dependent on it. The fame of ancient French literature had long reached Saint Petersburg; the names of Voltaire, d'Alembert, Diderot, and Helvetius were held in as much honour on the banks of the Neva as on those of the Seine, and, perhaps, even more. Catherine had imposed the yoke of her taste on her Court, as well as others, and the lessons of General Laharpe had especially drilled Alexander in it. He thought that Paris was still the source of great reputations for Sovereigns as well as subjects, and he could not appear before those whom he thought the dispensers of fame without some emotion. The scene went off very well. M. Lacretelle made one of his usual discourses; the Prince replied well enough. He afterwards attempted to speak to every member of the Academy of that branch of literature in which he was specially interested; and at this point he fell into some confusion. The Emperor had asked me to suggest to him a few words to address to each academician as he passed before him; but unhappily my voice

is not clear, and the Emperor was very hard of hearing, so that neither of us could perform our part properly, and the result was some embarrassment and confusion in the compliments; but in the eyes of the Institute the immense honour of having harangued the Autocrat of all the Russias made up for all. During that evening M. Suard, who was near eighty, trembled as if he had been only twenty.

We awaited the King with impatience; not that the Lieutenant-General of the kingdom at all impeded the course of Government. I, in particular, could not but feel flattered by his confidence, when in my capacity as Minister of the Interior I had anything to do with him; but, in spite of our efforts, the party that was formed around him grew larger and gained consistency. He endeavoured to meddle with State Affairs, and had already dictated some unfortunate selections to Monsieur. Besides, we could not escape too soon from the troubles which are unavoidable in the change from one form of Government to another. The brother of the King did not expect that His Majesty's arrival would have been so speedy; a fine sensibility made him think that the King would await the retirement of the foreign armies before repairing to his capital; and it would have been desirable on many accounts if Louis XVIII. had shared this view. Then Monsieur considered that the state of the King's health would be an obstacle to an active reign on his part. I remember that he said to me one day, "The King has an admirable head, as fresh as at thirty; but he has no physical strength, or almost none; that must be expected. Well, he will think for us, and we shall act for him."

The Provisional Government had submitted the Constitution prepared by the Senate to His Majesty, who saw no more difficulty in accepting it than in accepting

or even making another. The letters announcing his determination were signed, and just going to be closed, when M. de Blacas unexpectedly arrived at Hartwell, announcing that Monsieur had arrived at Paris, and been rapturously received; that he exercised the functions of royalty there under the title of Lieutenant-General of the kingdom, without there having been the least question in the world of the Constitution, or anything like it, and that they had not even thought themselves authorised to require an oath of the Prince. This news did not fail to warm up the constitutional disposition of Louis XVIII. They loudly applauded a proposal for the delay of the packet that ought to have borne his acceptance to France; but, on another side, the King did not care to allow his brother to get a taste for the exercise of the supreme authority, and his speedy departure for France was at once resolved on.

The Provisional Government was aware of these circumstances. Every day there was more agitation in the Court of the Count d'Artois. On the other hand, the unsuccessful journey of the Duke de Liancourt was deeply regretted. Lastly, no one knew what to think when Louis XVIII. was heard to say in his reply to the Prince Regent of England that it was to his counsels, to his glorious country, and to the confidence of its inhabitants, that under Divine Providence he should always attribute the re-establishment of his house on the throne of his ancestors. It was too evident that, in the mind of Louis XVIII., Providence and England had done everything for the restoration, and that, consequently France, the Senate, and the Provisional Government had done nothing. It was an unpleasant thing to hear, and threw clouds over the future that awaited us. I had been of opinion that some slight corrections should be made in the King's reply, and with few changes the

scandal which it implied might have been removed from it. It was feared, however, that the King's displeasure would be roused by an act of such audacity, and no one dared to do it. The eyes of all then turned to M. de Talleyrand. Trusting in that ability which had been tested so long, and in so many different ways, they hoped that he would succeed in acquiring such influence over the mind of Louis XVIII. as to induce him to submit to the requirements of these new times. He was urged to take possession of the King on his arrival in France, and go to meet him as far as Calais. He felt that such a journey would not be suitable for the chief of the Provisional Government, and would display a degree of precaution bordering on suspicion. He awaited the King's arrival at Compiègne before presenting himself. Those who knew not Louis XVIII. might well have expected something conclusive from this first conference. The issue was anxiously expected. I was the first to see M. de Talleyrand after his return; I asked him how matters went. He replied, "Well, and we parted pleased with each other."

I pressed for details, and obtained the following. They are apparently slight, but they indicate not only the feelings with which Louis XVIII. had quitted England, but also the fact that he had determined on a certain line of conduct with M. de Talleyrand. This was the commencement of the conversation as repeated to me by the Duke.

"Prince of Benevento, I am delighted to see you again. Many things have happened since we parted. You see we were the cleverest. If it had been you, you would say to me, *let us sit down* and talk; now, I say to you, sit down, and let us converse."

M. de Talleyrand spoke loudly in praise—or pretended to do so—of the exquisite politeness of this commence-

ment, and the kind of equality it indicated between the King and himself. I took the liberty of not being at all of his opinion; putting aside those little formal addresses, the kind of conceits that Louis XVIII. prided himself on, I found that the King was firmly impressed with the idea that he, and those who had returned from abroad with him, were abler men than M. de Talleyrand and those who had remained at home with him, whence came the natural conclusion that the latter were idiots, and could do nothing better than place themselves under the rod of the others. As long as Louis XVIII. was beyond the narrow sea, he attributed the restoration to Providence and England; on the continent, he became less modest, and attributed it to his own ability; and, it must be observed that he immediately applied to M. de Talleyrand the consequences of this theory of ability. If M. de Talleyrand had shown the most ability, he would have said to the King, "*Let us sit down* and talk," for then success on one side, and royalty on the other would have made a fair balance; but as Louis XVIII. was both King and the ablest man, he commanded, or, if preferred, allowed M. de Talleyrand to sit, "*Sit down.*"

It appeared that they had next some conversation about titles and honours. The King offered to M. de Talleyrand to recognise in his person the title of Prince of Benevento, and to allow him the rank of a foreign prince in France. To this M. de Talleyrand replied that he had the honour to be a Frenchman, and would not renounce that title for any other. It seemed that this conversation was in a great measure composed of quiet taunts, sometimes malicious on one side, always respectful on the other; and whether this game particularly pleased M. de Talleyrand, who is acknowledged as a master in it, or because he thought it a happy prelude to more

serious matters, he seemed both satisfied and flattered at this first interview. Thereupon, I came to the point, and insisted on knowing if the King had explained his views at all on the Provisional Government; if he would accept the constitution of the Senate, in a word, if he would join our ranks, or rather put himself at our head. M. de Talleyrand replied that the King had been well inclined, very well inclined to the Provisional Government; that he had expressed all his gratitude to himself, and that he had no doubt that he would accept the constitution of the Senate, which really meant that the King had at least eluded, if he had not refused, a reply. "Besides," added M. de Talleyrand, "the King will receive you to-morrow; and you will see what he will tell you."

The Provisional Ministers were indeed summoned to Saint-Ouen on the 2nd of May, to be presented to the King. The audience took place at half-past seven in the evening, in a room of the mansion without much light. It seemed as if they wished to familiarise us gradually with the spectacle of a King lolling in his arm-chair; we, who had scarcely left the presence of him who covered Europe with his giant stride. But, already, from this arm-chair, the King produced an impression on every one of us. A calm dignity, a caressing glance of the eye, a flattering tongue, questions put by a superior, but all to the purpose, revealed to us a sort of power, whose influence we had not yet felt. When my name was mentioned to the King he said to me, "Monsieur Beugnot, I do not know you personally, but I know your writings, and am very happy to be able to tell you that I have been much pleased with them."

I might have answered that I was not afraid of any appeal from His Majesty's judgment; I had, at most, sufficient presence of mind to stammer out some com-

mon expressions of gratitude. The King resumed, "You are very much occupied, for the Home-office must be overflowing with work in a devastated country; but have courage and patience, the most difficult step is taken."

The King descended from these generalities with Henrion de Pansey, Malouet, and even Louis, whom he had more or less known, and addressed gracious and personally flattering speeches to them; then he addressed us all, and dismissed us with these words: "Gentlemen, the work I am well aware is heavy; I will undertake as much of it as my age and infirmities can support. I promise you that good-will for the rest will not be wanting, and heaven will help us."

I returned quickly to the Home-office to prepare for the King's entrance, which was to take place the next day. I had conceived and executed in some sort of way a project of restoring, if only in plaster, the statue of Henry IV. on the platform of the Pont Neuf. There was nothing left at Paris that a horse could be cast from, and I was obliged to have recourse to the horses of that inferior chariot which we had brought from Berlin in 1806, and which was taken back in 1815, always by the revered right of superior power. At last the statue and horse re-appeared as if by magic. An inscription was wanted for it; it required to be short, and at the same time to mark the coincidence of the descendant's return and the reappearance of the ancestor's statue. I wished it to be in French, that it might be generally understood. I racked my brain all the morning; I tried twenty versions on paper; but as soon as I read what I had written I scratched it out, either because it was too long, too short, unintelligible, or silly. At last while trying versions in French I produced the Latin word *resurrexit*. It was good, but trite. I remembered that it had been

inscribed on the pedestal of the statue of Henry IV. on the accession of a prince a hundred times worthier, Louis XVI., and it remained there until a wag thought proper to add below it—

> Of our Henry revived I like the wit,
> But the proof is the sight of the fowl on the spit.*

I could think no more of my *resurrexit*, and, besides, the same wag, if he was not dead, might have come again and asked us for his fowl on the spit, and the Cossacks had taken good care there should be none. In my perplexity I thought of consulting the class of Inscriptions and of Belles-Lettres at the Institute, and they were kind enough to submit to me four versions, all of which had some merit, but none were completely satisfactory. At last I cast a final glance at the sheet covered with my attempts and erasures, and I concocted this version: "The return of one revives the other." It was a rather short paraphrase of *resurrexit;* but it wanted stilts, and the construction was poor; yet, as the root of the notion was there, I tried a Latin translation, in these words, *Ludovico reduce Henricus redivivus.* That moment I was struck with the happiness of my translation, and without hesitation adjudged to myself the prize. Some days later, I was much surprised to read that the inscription was due to M. Lally Tollendal. I had laboured so much for its production that I could not bear to be robbed of it; and besides an author's pride grudges such sacrifices. I soon sought an opportunity of meeting M. Lally, and asked him the reason of this sort of theft. He did not confess it, and by one of those expedients peculiar to himself he eluded an explanation. According to him I had conceived the most happy, the most beauti-

* D'Henri resuscité j'approve le bon mot;
Mais, pour me le prouver, il faut la poule au pot.

ful, the most admirable notion when I made the good king's statue suddenly re-appear; and in order to show me his personal gratitude, he twice threw himself into my arms and embraced me. I tore myself, as best I could, from the transports of M. Lally, and returned to the inscription, he for his part again asserting the prodigious effect that my marvellous, incomparable idea would produce in France, abroad, in the whole world. At last, after a sufficiently amusing contest, constantly recurring on my side to the same question, while on his were transports of admiration, and even tears, we parted, leaving the matter at the same stage exactly as when I attacked him. I therefore determined to make it as widely known as possible, and even in the King's chamber, that M. Lally, who was himself so rich, did me too much honour in appropriating a line of Latin that was really mine, mine only, and whose only merit consisted in a comparison that had escaped no one. Louis XVIII., who attached importance to small literary matters, for he thought them some of the riches that existed before 1789, spoke of it to M. Lally, and he eloquently proved to His Majesty that in a kingdom like his, in which there were so many men of genius, it was not surprising that they should sometimes clash.

The first time that I worked with Louis XVIII. it was to give him an account of the preparations for the festival at his entrance. He received me with kindness, but with dignity. I easily saw that the familiar details, the effusion, the freedom, I would say, which his brother permitted, were not suitable with him. I had endeavoured to surround the King with as much state as was possible at the moment. I perceived by the explanations he required of me, and by some criticisms, that still he was not satisfied on that head; and thence I could judge that those who blamed him for carrying a taste for magnifi-

cence to excess had not deceived us. At the time when Louis XVIII. was only the King's next brother, he was reproached at Versailles with a haughtiness so out-of-place in his position that it seemed ridiculous in him. Louis XVIII. had lost none of it.

A kind of magnificence could be displayed at the King's arrival that there was no means of exhibiting on that of his brother. There were, indeed, the same crowd and the same acclamations. Besides, the windows were adorned without exception with white banners, and, what was more important, filled with women who were charming, or all made beautiful by the event; and yet this was not such an entry as Monsieur's; the heart did not speak so loud in it; and there was none of that enthusiasm of the prince, the citizens, and the soldiers pressing and jostling each other, as in a family celebration, without well understanding what it was about. The sorrowful intelligence that all our conquests had to be given up might have been generally known. The companions of Napoleon loudly deplored it, and cast ridicule on a king buried in his arm-chair.

There was, indeed, in the outward appearance of the King, something strange to a nation of soldiers who for fifteen years had been under the authority of a chief of restless activity. It cannot be imagined how disadvantageous this comparison was to Louis XVIII. One day he was so gracious as to speak of it. The King had replied to the marshals of France, I do not know where, that, all gouty as he was, they should see him, if required by the glory of France, march at their head. These gentlemen, most of whom were already gouty themselves, delighted to be in the fashion, had taken the King at his word, and His Majesty was entreated by them to show himself on horseback, if only for a few moments, and on ground most carefully prepared. The

King was not the man to give a direct refusal, he only advised them to support him on each side with powerful horsemen, ready to prevent his fall or to bear the weight of it, adding, "I tremble for the man who chances to have the honour of supporting me," and maliciously insinuating that this honour was reserved for the marshals. The King told me that after this little explanation the idea of mounting him on horseback was received with great coolness, and he thought he should hear no more about it. So Louis XVIII. began to display his skill in finding expedients, sometimes malicious, always clever, for transferring to others the difficulties in which he was about to be involved himself, and afterwards he was excessively delighted at the embarrassment into which they had been thrown. He carried on a little war of frolicsome tricks from his arm-chair, and no one was a match for him in it. M. de Talleyrand, who had himself been wounded in it, and that more than once, took his revenge by calling him the king of tricks, or the tricky king.

The period between the entrance of the King into Paris on the 3rd of May till the 13th of the same month, when he formed his ministry, was filled by the vows of homage that came to him from every corner of France. From the first body in the state down to the justice of the peace in a village, there was rivalry as to who should exhaust all the laudatory forms of the language. The matter was favourable, for there were few cities in the history of which there was not some fact honourable to our ancient kings, and this time, at least, the adulation was French; and besides at this period public functionaries still knew how to write and speak. The King had a mental skirmish with the orators, and sent them off astonished at the fidelity of his memory and the happiness of his remarks.

Louis XVIII. preserved all the dignity of the throne amid the crowd of sovereigns that were present at Paris, all escorted by thousands of soldiers; and though he himself was disarmed and almost powerless, he was so penetrated with the superiority of the King of France to any other kings, that he had managed to make them feel it themselves. The Emperor of Russia was an example. M. de Talleyrand had failed in his design of having included in the list of Peers his friend the Duke of Vicenza,* for whom Alexander also had a peculiar esteem, and he begged the Emperor to make a direct request to Louis XVIII. His Imperial Majesty was quite willing, and went to the Tuileries without delay. The King received him with all the grace he could assume, but without the least abatement of his dignity. Alexander was so much struck that he was unable to urge a request which he knew had been refused. He returned to his palace no further advanced, and next day frankly avowed it to Talleyrand. The latter, however, did not lose courage; he reproached the Emperor with being the only person who did not know his own power, and managed to persuade him to return to the Tuileries. This time Louis XVIII. had been warned, it is not very well known by whom, and was upon his guard. The match, therefore, was no longer an equal one. The King began with speeches flattering to the Emperor, which at first softened him. He then made some general remarks on the sad position of a sovereign who, after a revolution, was free neither when he granted nor when he refused favours. This was said in such round terms and with such an accent of truth, and even of feeling, that the Emperor was caught as he had been the time before, and again left the Tuileries without having opened his mouth on the object of his visit. It was

* Caulaincourt.

easier for this generous Prince to offer the Duke a great establishment in Russia, and press him to accept it, than to pronounce his name to Louis XVIII. It was on such occasions that the King was incontestably superior. And, in truth, I could afterwards perceive that he was really of opinion that, among all the sovereigns then present at Paris, there was hardly one besides himself that was a real gentleman.

I attended, on the 6th of May, to work with the King. I brought some matters of business to him, on which his brother had been discreet enough to decline giving any decision, when he was informed of the near approach of His Majesty. Two of these matters were really important. Quite recently I had had occasion to work with Napoleon at Mayence, and I had taken the same method for the King, that is to say, that I had joined to each report the papers upon which it was founded, carefully arranged, so that I could find them at need, and before commencing work I had given the King the sheet, that is to say, a statement containing, in a summary form, information as to the names of the parties, the nature of the affair, its special urgency, and a column of observations. I begged the King to cast his eye over the sheet, and to be so good as to inform me with which of these affairs I should commence. The King, who had never seen or thought of any such thing, asked me what I meant. I had the want of tact to tell him that such was the way in which we transacted business with Napoleon, who was not always able to allow his ministers the time necessary for transacting the business which they brought him, and selected those that seemed to him to be the most urgent. "Very good, sir," said the King to me, "but as I shall always be able to give you all the time you want, you may relinquish your forms of business towards Bonaparte; I do not hold to them at all. Begin at the beginning."

So was it done; I took the first matter in order in my portfolio. I related it carefully, even reading some of the *pièces justificatives* along with the report. I do not know how long the King followed me, but towards the end he gave proofs of impatience and weariness, and I fancy that in his heart he thoroughly repented of having told me he would give me as much time as I wanted. My opinion passed without difficulty, and the King signed the ordinance. I began the report of the second matter in the same style, and with as much care. The difficulty in it was greater; a choice had to be made between two equally eligible decisions. I had contented myself with laying down the reasons on both sides with equal care, and requesting the King's resolution. This plan would have suited Napoleon, it wearied Louis XVIII. However, having several times made a gesture indicative of weariness and uncertainty, he made a just decision, and even added some reasons to those I had given him. So I kept the King for an hour and a half; but towards the end of the work, he could not conceal the expression of his delight at getting rid of me and my portfolio. He said to me, "Sir, you have not spared me; and this is a very fair beginning; but I tell you again, I shall always be ready to receive you." Next day, M. de Blacas asked me if I had not been a councillor at the Parliament. I told him I had not attained that honour, and that I had been during a very short time president of what was then called an inferior tribunal. "The King thought so," said M. de Blacas. I wished to know how the King had detected such a trivial circumstance. "By the way you reported your business yesterday." "Was the King not pleased?" "I do not say that; but he thought that you were rather long, and dwelt on the details." I promised to improve.

Some days after, I went again to the King. This time

my baggage was lighter, and I started in an expeditious humour. I really hurried my explanations; but they still were explanations, and took some time. I only detained the King three quarters of an hour, and got some twenty signatures. That day I thought I should have deserved a prize for despatch. I was wrong; I learnt, and again by the same means, that the King still complained of my losing time in details. M. de Blacas quoted M. d'Aguesseau to me as the man who, in the King's opinion, presented his business with most moderation and grace. I inquired what business M. d'Aguesseau had, perchance, to engage His Majesty? The answer was that of the Order of the Saint Esprit. At that time the business of the Order must have been very simple, and it was not difficult for M. d'Aguesseau to be successful, for he had good and gentle manners; but nothing more could be expected of him, for the grandson of the illustrious Chancellor inherited nothing from his grandfather but his name. I had occasion to relate my ill success with the King to my colleague, the Abbé Louis, and he laughed heartily. "What," said he, "did not you see from the first day, in the first transaction, that you were wearying the King to death? And then, what is the use of making reports to him? It would be just as much use to make them to a saint in a niche. I give him all the orders to sign at once, and he does not refuse one. Only, as he is a long time writing his name, while he is doing it, I just say a few words on the matter. I do not weary him; it is he that tires me, as he is so long about his signature." I thought I knew enough without consulting M. d'Aguesseau, and the first time that I went to work with the King again, I did the same as the Abbé Louis. I found no more difficulty than he did; only, as everyone works according to his own character, I had substituted for the im-

petuosity that the Abbé takes into everything, by the respect and attention imposed by the place where I was at work.

I transacted business only six times with the King while I was in charge of the portfolio of the Ministry of the Interior; and I fancy I had made but little advance in his esteem, or, rather, in his favour. I in no degree possessed the art of combining amusement with business, because I never departed from my subject, and did not know how to seize on happy anecdotes connected with it, to refresh the King's attention, and give him a chance of exhibiting all the understanding he had. He only saw in me a sturdy labourer, who had passed his apprenticeship under an austere master.

It was well understood that the organisation of a permanent ministry was under discussion, and my friends blamed me for not having an eye to it. I was too much occupied to waste an hour of my time on my own affairs. I am by nature very unsuitable for what is called intrigue, and am very glad to take up anything which enables me to dispense with it. So I allowed myself to believe that the Minister of the Interior would be selected among the members of the Government, or the Provisional ministers, and looking at it with the telescope of self-love, I really thought that the office was too close to me to be taken from me. However, the evening before the organisation of the cabinet, a saying of the Countess de Simiane's—just the thing to shake my security—reached me. Madame de Simiane was one of the most charming beauties of the time; her voice was enchanting, and her native good nature was constantly apparent, and always adorned with grace. One longed so much to find that she had intellect that it was difficult to deny her a little; but she was a Damas, and all the Damas that I have known,

including the Abbé, had excellent hearts and narrow minds.

Madame de Simiane was one of those intimate friends among whom the Abbé de Montesquiou had spent his life for fifty years past. The approaching organisation of the cabinet was spoken of at her house, and some one mentioned my name for the Home Office. The Countess was shocked at it, and when the same person persisted, praising my capacity, Madame de Simiane said, "That has nothing to do with it; all very well in Bonaparte's days; but now the ministers must be men of rank, with good workers at their orders to do the business, such as are called *hacks*." They made me afraid that the Abbé de Montesquiou would obtain the post of Minister for the Home Department, and want to keep me as one of his hacks. Next day I learnt that my fears were partly justified, and that I was only appointed Director-General of the Police of the kingdom. The very evening of his nomination, the Abbé de Montesquiou came and very politely begged me to leave the house of the Minister of the Home Department, without saying a word of business, or asking me for the least information.

I had no taste for the general direction of the police, and sense enough to know that what was called the police under the rule of Napoleon, that is to say, of a master, was impracticable under that of a Bourbon, who had already, by his declaration at St. Ouen, renounced such a pretension. I hurried to the Chancellor, to beg him to relieve me of this post, and to procure for me, instead, the superintendence of the roads and bridges. I represented to him, what was plain enough, that M. Pasquier was much better suited than myself to direct the police of the kingdom; that his flexible and ever-ready mind, his experience, his reputation, were treasures not to be

lost. The Chancellor told me he would go and speak to the King about it, and asked me to accompany him. I preferred to wait. When he came back from the castle, M. Dambray informed me that the very day the appointments were made, the Abbé Montesquiou had spoken of M. Pasquier for the roads and bridges, and he had been accepted. He added that the King's brother would not listen to the name of M. Pasquier for the police, and urged me to keep it. I had not the courage to make any promise, and I begged him to keep open my old place of Counsellor of State for me.

When I got home, I found all around me in despair at my discomfiture. Every one had arranged his little post at the Home Office conveniently, and feared to lose it without compensation. More than half the joy with which the appointment of ministers is greeted falls to the share of their wives, and still greater is their sorrow at their fall. Mine conjured me to take the police, at least provisionally. As she was gifted with a great deal of sense, she allowed that I was ill fitted for that work, but I should not have to perform it long. As she had not the least conception of the times before the Revolution, the idea of a court Abbé as Minister of the Home Department seemed absurd to her, and she thought that they would not get on three months without coming back to me. I yielded, and left the house in the Rue de Grenelle, for that on the Quai de Théatins. So there I was condemned to a task for which I had always had more than a repugnance. I began this new career with the conviction that I should be found very incapable, very unfortunate in it, and that I should run some risk of losing the small reputation I had gained. I had always on my mind Madame de Simiane's *hack*, and before I entered on my functions, I obtained a royal ordinance that placed the prefects and sub-prefects of the kingdom

under my orders, as Directors of Police, and gave me the same honours as the ministers about the King's person, and in his palaces. They would not give me the title of Minister of General Police, because it sounded ill, and its real significance was hidden under the name of Director-General. But I had easily caused it to be understood, that if anything was expected of me, I must, in the first place, have proper instruments, and then the surroundings of my post must be such as could elevate me in public opinion.

But at the very time that the police of the kingdom was being installed on the Quay des Théatins, another was being installed at the Pavillon Marsan, having, like the first, its officers, inspectors, and agents, and at its head the King's brother had put a gentleman of Franche-Comté, named Terrier de Monciel. I had seen this M. de Monciel in 1792, then Minister of the Home Department under Louis XVI. Then, he was one of the small number of Constitutionals who followed the colours of Lameth ; and this party pushed him on to the council. He then behaved like a man of sense and courage, and I had a good opinion of him. I went to find him, and begged a frank reply to the question whether he believed there could be two police forces in France, working against each other from morning to night, and endeavouring to destroy one another. I pointed out a most dangerous subject of division between the King and his brother in this police rivalry, and I told him it seemed to me better to unite the departments, and that he or I should take charge of the whole. M. de Monciel was then Chief of the Privy Council of the King's brother, a Minister of the *Vert Cabinet.* He held to his post, and told me that his police instead of being an injury to mine would be very useful to it. His agents were men of good birth, amateurs, who communicated with him, and would not

consent to have relations with me without a repugnance that might easily be imagined; he received confidences from them that they would not make to me; in a word, his police was such a centre of loyalty to the King as could burn brightly at the Tuileries, but would be stifled at the Quai des Théatins. Besides, there was nothing like authority in his mission; he worked for the public order, and he would faithfully send me any information that might be useful. As I gained nothing by my appeal to Monciel, I went straight to Monsieur. The Prince showed himself, as he had ever done, affable and kind, as in the early days of my intercourse with him; but I saw plainly that bias had been given to his mind; he reproached me with having a bad set around me, and none but Bonapartists in my offices and as agents. I was, he was very sure, an honest man, and very much devoted to them, but if I allowed myself to be blinded, harm would be done in spite of me, and I ought not to complain if precautions were taken in all directions, and because they thought that two eyes were better than one. I could see from the rest of the discourse, that they inspired Monsieur with distrust of all that was going on, and that they endeavoured to make him, in what they called the interest of his family, the chief of a Royalist opposition. I feared that it would by and by become very difficult to be friends at the same time with the King and his brother. I made some allusion to this subject, but discreetly; Monsieur, however, seemed not to hear me, and I left him, for the first time, dissatisfied with the audience he had granted me.

It was evident that the difficulties of the police department, which were already great enough, would be increased by the rivalry of another police possessing the confidence of the King's brother, in which men found employment who put their falsehoods under the protec-

tion of their reputation as Royalists; for, already, in spite of all my endeavours to prevent it, two camps had been formed with different names. The Royalists occupied one, and cast into the other, without distinction, the men of all periods of the Revolution.

CHAPTER VII.

Commission for the Preparation of the Charter of 1814—Members of the Commission—Project of the Abbé Montesquiou—Serious Omission—M. Boissy d'Anglas—Religious Liberty—Establishment of a State Religion—Freedom of the Press—The Rights of Property—Purchasers of National Property—Embarrassing Position—The Army and Navy—The Forms of Royal Government—Initiation of Laws—A Difficult Task—The Civil List.

SOME days after my arrival at the office of the Police, the King sent for me, and said that he had had in view to make me one of his representatives at a commission of members of the Senate and the Legislative Body, who would be engaged on the preparation of the Constitution.

The King, in communicating this favour to me, made it a condition that I should not inform M. de Talleyrand of the work done at the meetings. I begged of the King to observe that the secret could hardly be kept among twenty-five persons, and that M. de Talleyrand would certainly be informed by some other person. His Majesty replied, "That may be; I only ask that it may not be through you." The two other representatives were the Abbé Montesquiou and M. Ferrand. Our first meeting was at the Chancellor's house, where M. de Montesquiou produced a project containing almost all the articles that reappeared in the charter, and in the same order. The Constitution on which the Senate had deliberated, the Declaration of Saint Ouen, and the Charter, are all of the same family, for these documents only reproduce principles

generally agreed on. The consequences might be more or less developed, but here, too, in the course of five-and-twenty years, discussion had been exhausted. It was in 1790 that the system of two Chambers was first proposed. It was then put in opposition to the Republican system. Besides, the example of England was before the world, perhaps deceptive, but captivating, so that, apparently, all that was now requisite was to write it out and put it in order. Experience has given only too many proofs that it was a very different matter, and that the Monarchy was liable to be compromised by having too largely employed, at its Restoration, materials furnished by the Revolution. Unhappily the tendency of ideas was calculated to draw us in that direction. From 1789 till the coming of Napoleon, the principles of the Constituent Assembly were in all minds, and served as a basis to all our institutions. Napoleon sharply opened the interlude, and filled it with the marvels of his reign; but his fall closed it, and the talk was everywhere resumed. We were at that point without suspecting our blindness, when the Charter was attempted.

It was arranged that the project of the Abbé Montesquiou should be presented to the meeting for deliberation and that the King's three representatives should defend it in discussion. I was also charged to keep notes of the deliberations, as well as with the task of drawing them up in proper form at the conclusion.

This discussion, though much too short, was not wanting in dignity. The time at least was well employed. The Commission was composed in the manner I have described, half of members of the Senate, and half of the Legislative Body. Among the first appeared Barthelemy, Boissy d'Anglas, Fontanes, Barbé-Marbois, Garnier, Pastoret, Semonville, Vimar. The members of the Legislative Body were Laîné, Blanquart de Bailleul,

Chabaud-Latour, Dubois-Savary, Duhamel, de Gillevoisin, Faget de Baure, Felix Faulcon, Clausel de Coussergues.

The sitting opened on the 31st of May. At its opening the Chancellor announced that the meeting took place by the King's order to discuss the constitutional act which His Majesty was willing to grant to France. His Majesty, he said, had been pleased to name the Chancellor of France president of the assembly, with the Abbé de Montesquiou Minister of the Home Department. Ferrand and Beugnot, counsellors of state, were to be his representatives at it. He then read the list of the members of the assembly, drawn up by the King. On my side I read the King's declaration dated from Saint Ouen, the second of last April, in which His Majesty laid down the basis of the constitutional enactment that was to be proposed for discussion.

Before commencing to discuss the basis of the matter M. Boissy d'Anglas called attention to a serious omission in the project of the constitutional enactment. There was no declaration in it defining what was the government of France, nor was there anything about the succession to the throne, the regency, and other points of importance, interesting in a high degree to the country and the reigning family.

M. de Montesquiou answered that he was grateful to M. Boissy d'Anglas for having given him an opportunity for a clear explanation, and that at the commencement, of the nature and form of the enactment on which they were about to deliberate. It was necessary to be well imbued with the spirit in which the King returned to his states, and made the declaration of Saint Ouen. He entered them in virtue of the fundamental principle that establishes a hereditary monarchy from male to male in order of primogeniture. It was by the royal power in-

herent to his person that he spoke in the Declaration of Saint Ouen, and that he will more explicitly explain himself in the enactment to be discussed. It would be improper to propose for discussion the actual power to which the Government belongs, and which has called together the present assembly. Then there would be danger, for whatever might be the form of declaration that issued from the discussion, it would diminish rather than confirm a principle having its root in past ages, under the shelter of which France rose so high among the nations, and whose momentary oblivion caused all the troubles. So it should be well understood that it is a project of a royal enactment to be discussed, and it is even necessary that the title of this act should mark its origin to all eyes. M. Boissy d'Anglas replied that he disputed nothing advanced by M. de Montesquiou; but that he did not the least believe that a principle was weakened by being appealed to on a solemn occasion like that at present. The return of the house of Bourbon is a fact that will be remarkable in history. It is also a fact that France recurred to this ancient family from the old prescriptive right of this family to furnish kings. Why is it considered unsuitable to declare these facts, which are titles for the reigning family in confirmation of the others, and can do no otherwise than enhance the importance of the enactment to be deliberated on? M. Faget de Baure supported the opinion of M. de Montesquiou. He thought that all that had passed since the Restoration was the recognition of a pre-existing right, not requiring to be written anywhere as being in the mind and heart of all the French. Besides, the origin of people and kings is not to be recklessly examined, for there are sacred monuments that should not be touched. M. de Fontanes said, "I insist on this latter truth with all my force. A power superior to that of people and kings made

societies, and cast diverse governments on the world. Their advance should rather be directed, than their principles explained. The more ancient and venerable are their bases, the more will he who wishes to search them out lose himself. He who meddles with them too closely becomes imprudent and may shake everything. The sage respects them, and casts his eyes down before the august darkness that should cover the mysteries of society, like the mysteries of religion; but if there are veils that human prudence ought not to raise, there are incontestable rights for all citizens manifest to all eyes. Let these rights be frankly discussed, and if necessary with courage; but if we tend towards the entrance of a more elevated region, we shall not approach it without again rousing tempests. Rather let us be the first to give an example of a salutary awe, and may this example restrain the minds not corrected by the fatal experience of contrary conduct. I propose for the discussion to commence at the first article of the project that has just been read." The proposition of M. de Fontanes was adopted.

Judging from this first datum, the articles in the constitution of the Senate, and the declaration of Saint Ouen, would pass without difficulty, and they were the greatest number. So the four first articles were only read; but there was a good deal of discussion on the fifth article, which guarantees the liberty of all religions, and the equality of their rights under government protection. The sixth article, declaring that the Catholic Apostolic Roman religion is that of the State, was passed under the fifth, and preceded, as logical order required, that which guaranteed the same protection to other religions. M. Boissy d'Anglas sharply opposed the article. According to him, to establish a State religion was to establish a dominant religion, and relegate the

others among foreign religions—namely, those that Catholicism tolerates as long as it is feeble, that it torments when it has the means, and proscribes if it becomes the stronger. Modern history is only a long example of what the orator advanced. After having established in principle that the Catholic religion is the religion of the State, it was logical to make all religions that are not that of the State subordinate to it, and not at all to put them on the same line. This incongruity will be some day observed, and the Catholic clergy has advanced to intolerance through smaller breaches than that.

M. Boissy d'Anglas supported his opinion with his natural warmth, and the authority derived from his virtues, his experience, and glorious antecedents. M. de Fontanes answered him. He began by doing justice to the broad manner in which the subsequent article had been drawn, granting the liberty of worship. No longer was tolerance the question, but an equality of rights, an exactly similar position, and certainly the communions at variance with the Romish church could want nothing more. But when once that was granted, would it not be well to recall the fact recognised in 1801, by the Concordat passed between Pius VII. and the French Government, namely, that the Catholic Apostolic Roman religion includes the great majority of the French, and therefore the State ought to make its prayers or thanksgivings before her altars, as has been done for twelve centuries, and likewise that the King of France has thence received titles of honour and pre-eminence among Christian kings. Then how is it possible that the same right should not be recognised in the State, as in other believers, to avow the religion they profess? Nor can there be any more suitable expression, or less dangerous in its consequences, than to declare the Catholic religion

to be that of the State, especially when the door is shut against any possible attacks upon other forms of worship. M. Chabaud-Latour reproduced the pleas already urged by M. Boissy d'Anglas, but without entirely opposing the fifth article. He required that, first of all, pains should be taken to establish entire liberty of worship, because that should be the chief principle, and in consequence take precedence; that afterwards it might be seen if anything more might be granted to the Catholic religion. The Abbé de Montesquiou considered himself prevented or excused by his cassock from saying anything; and M. Ferrand pressed me to speak, as he did not venture to risk himself in a debate that had become so animated. I took it up at the advanced point it had reached. I proceeded to inquire how the declaration that the Catholic Apostolic Roman religion was the religion of the State could be abused, and I proved without difficulty that it was all provided for by the subsequent article. I made some allowance for the apprehensions of M. Boissy d'Anglas, but I begged his permission likewise to defend the Catholic religion, and I repeated freely all I remembered of the excellent speeches of M. Portalis on this important subject, before the Council of State, and the Legislative Body, in 1802. As I concluded, I saw an impression was made on the Commission, and made a sign to the Chancellor to beg him to take the vote. He did not understand, for he was quite unacquainted with such tactics; he gave time for confused private conversations, among which M. Garnier requested a hearing. This speaker declared that he had listened attentively, and yet no one had taught him what was the meaning of these words, the State Religion; and that for his part he could not find any, so that he attached very little importance to the place occupied by this declaration, if it

ought to have one; but he required their attention to the article that decreed the liberty and equality of forms of worship. I began a reply; the Chancellor made a sign in the negative, in concert, as I fancied, with the Abbé de Montesquiou; he passed by the fifth article, containing a declaration in favour of the Catholic religion, and put to the vote the article relating to the liberty and equality; this was passed unanimously, and so became the fifth article in numerical order. When this was done, the Abbé Montesquiou began to read the seventh article, relating to the payment of ministers of religion. I then observed that the Chancellor, no doubt foreseeing the desire of the assembly, had, without consulting them, given priority to the sixth article before the fifth, but as the latter had not been rejected it remained to be put to the vote. The Chancellor asked M. Garnier if he wished to speak; he replied carelessly enough that he took no more interest in the proposed article. M. Boissy d'Anglas demanded its rejection, but no longer with the same ardour, and as if to absolve his conscience. I wished to resume the defence of the article, but stopped because I saw that the Commission was beginning to get tired. It was put to the question, and passed unanimously, except for four votes. Only the order of the numbers was inverted, to the regret of a great number of the members of the Commission, and to mine from the contempt for the rules of logic. The day of this sitting I went to the King; he was already informed of what had passed.

"I am obliged to you," said his Majesty to me, "for the manner in which you defended the article relative to religion. I see that the debate was between Catholics and Protestants, and that the philosophers took no share in it, though you certainly have some in the Commission. I think it quite natural that M. Boissy d'Anglas should

have defended the Protestants, and strange that the Abbé Montesquiou should have said nothing on behalf of the Catholics. I can guess the excuse that he is going to bring me. The best is that the article is passed, but it is very ill placed." I replied, "It depends on the King to give each article its proper place, and I will do it if he will condescend to authorise me." "No," replied the King, "we must not touch the articles determined by the Commission if we could, nor even the order of them."

At the sitting of the first of June the Chancellor submitted the eighth article to discussion, which secured to Frenchmen the right to publish their opinions, and have them printed, in conformity with the laws for the repression of the abuse of this liberty. This article found some supporters and some animated opponents. And in this place must be inserted this essential observation, that there was not one member in that Commission who thought that the liberty of the newspapers would be comprised in what was then understood by the liberty of the press. It was believed that it comprised books of all sizes, works, and even pamphlets of any size; but that daily journals were under the dominion of the police, and could not be removed from their action. If an article that declared it expressly had been proposed to the Commission, it would have passed, if not unanimously, certainly by a large majority. Nor need any one have been surprised, who reflected that the Commission was composed of men of learning and experience, who had, for the most part, passed through the miseries or horrors of the Revolution, and had not forgotten how large a share was due to the licence of the journals, which is inseparable from their liberty; and yet, putting aside this great exception, the most superior minds were still divided on the question of unlimited liberty. De Fontanes, de Pastoret, de Semonville, Faget de Baure expressed their

apprehensions, and tried to discover whether it were not possible to erect barriers in the Constitution that even the law could not overpass; and I remember that M. de Fontanes, among others, when he had spoken on the question with the loftiness of thought and dignity of expression that are his characteristics, concluded thus: "I know what has been already said, and foresee what may be said again in favour of this liberty; I do not at all the less consider it the most active solvent of all society. We shall end in that if we do not take care, and I, from this moment, loudly declare, that I shall never look on myself as free wherever the press may be so." However, this liberty found active defenders in the Commission, but wise ones, who agreed to restrictive laws without difficulty; such as MM. Barbé-Marbois, Laîné, Boissy d'Anglas, Felix Faulcon. The Abbé Montesquiou spoke very well, attempting to direct opinion to a middle course; he agreed as to the dangers attached to freedom of the press, against which there were no sufficient defences, even before 1789. He said it was necessary to wait till the legislative power, now enlightened by an experience that had cost so dear, should place barriers to secure religion, morality, and individual honour. He showed that the proposed article not only secures the means to the law, but even imposes those duties on it. M. Clausel de Coussergues put forth very wise views which he applied especially to the defence of religion; he thought it suitable, and even easy, to impose for the future certain rules to prevent the extravagances of an imprudent or hasty legislature. The value of his reflections was generally allowed, but the King's representatives expressed, by my voice, their regret that there was not sufficient time to descend into details however valuable; and, besides, I showed that the system adopted by the King had been to lay down general

principles only in the Constitution, and to leave the deduction of consequences to time and experience; the Commission applauded the wisdom of this course.

This article was proposed and carried in these words: "The French have the right to publish and print their opinions, provided they conform to the laws for the repression of abuse of this liberty."

It has been stated that both the words *to prevent* and *to repress* were to be found in the motion submitted for discussion; that was not the case. I only find the word *repress* in the copy that I used at the debate, and do not remember that of *prevent* having been spoken. But I find among my papers a specimen of the Constitution presented by the Senate, where the words *prevent* and *repress* really follow each other as they do here. Who removed the first of those words? and with what intent was it removed from the motion debated before the Commission? I do not know; but, whether it were suppressed by mistake or out of forgetfulness, certainly there was no intention of thereby extending the liberty of the press. It might have been considered, and, in my opinion, with good reason, that the word *repress*, alone, was enough, and that there is no place more appropriate for economy in words than in the enunciation of laws. Indeed, setting aside some subtilties and technical quibbles, that party spirit, or, rather, want of honesty, has introduced into the question, it remains evident that abuses are only repressed, upon their appearance, by laws that hinder their reproduction, and prevent them for the future. True repression consists in that. To maintain that law should first permit an abuse to arise, in order thence to obtain the right of suppressing it, is to fall into absurdity; for abuses might be carried to such a point as for their punishment to become impossible; and has not the Government been seen,

when committed to this false and dangerous interpretation, speedily to give up prosecuting the crimes of the press, because the prosecution was more perilous than impunity? Certainly the word to *repress* was sufficient, for it implied the action of *preventing;* but judging by what passed afterwards, and which could hardly then have been divined, it is to be regretted that the two words were not employed to strengthen one another, even at the cost of redundancy.

The ninth article asserted the rights of property, without excepting that which is called national, the law making no difference between them. This article was opposed by MM. de Fontanes and Laîné, essentially on account of the terms in which it was drawn up.

"Why," said the first, "not be contented with the determination found in the Constitution of the Senate, simply providing for the observation of the sales of the national property? This article might have been followed by another that should point out the justice of an indemnity to the former owners at a future time; and if the new ones are alarmed, as I should not think likely, they would have been better reassured than by an article of extreme strictness, such as, putting all public favour on one side, might awake such natural resentment on the other. I appreciate the nobleness of those loyal subjects, who have grown old under the banner of France, wandering on foreign soil. The first of their wishes is fulfilled, as they bring it back to us unstained; but they are men, and the lot of our poor species is such that we accustom ourselves, in course of time, to trample on the tomb where our fathers repose, and never pass the tree that they have planted, without irritation at finding the usurper seated beneath it. I demand another version of the ninth article."

I was responsible for this version. Information received by me from all sides indicated excitement among all purchasers of national property, and especially of the estates of emigrants. In Brittany and Poitou, some former owners had made imprudent attempts to recover possession. They were few in number, and these attempts came to nothing. This was certainly no matter of surprise, but rather of wonder that, among so many owners who had been despoiled, and in an armed and excited class, matters had not been carried further; but the papers had already made a bad use of some isolated facts in order to excite alarm. I saw it increase daily, and attached great value to obtaining an article in the Constitution that should set minds completely at ease. I thought it the more necessary that, in a late conversation with the King, I had intended to defend a man in office, who was said to have been a purchaser of national property, by arguing that he had really bought Church property, but that he would never have had any idea of buying the estates of emigrants. The King replied, "I cannot see what difference there can be, unless that the one were still more sacred than the other." This speech, made with some temper, made such an impression on me that the King perceived it, and added, in a milder tone, "Well, what is done is done; for the worse or for the better for those who have gained and those who have lost this property." The qualification did not entirely remove from my mind the anxiety aroused in it by the speech, and I thought I should deserve well of the King and his family for forewarning them against the prejudice I supposed them to entertain against the purchasers of national property. To the same object, rather than to want of funds, should be attributed the efforts that were made to induce Louis XVIII. himself to alienate

some of this property and allow purchasers to enter on his domains.

However it may be, I defended the ninth article to the Commission with all my power. I said, "I know nothing worse than two kinds of property in a State. It is the essence of property that it should be of one kind,—that it should bear a stamp of the same character to all eyes,—in a word, that it should be a simple idea, I might almost say a fixed idea. On these conditions only it is inviolable. Thus the discovery of a form of expression making no sort of distinction between ancient and modern property has been fortunate, making one mass alone of them, on which, all alike, can be placed the seal of inviolability. The result will be that the old proprietors will be interested in making the new proprietors respected, and I do not know what more powerful guarantee for the latter can be devised, as this assures them not only of the protection of Government, but of that of the whole of society; and I will venture to say that there is no redundancy, as the illustrious orator who opened the debate has so well expressed. Proscriptions are soon over; confiscations last, and arouse interminable hatred after them if not prevented from the beginning. M. de Fontanes might have furnished us with memorable examples from antiquity, since his knowledge of its spirit is as great as his familiarity with its language. We are in a condition very similar to that in which the Roman orator spoke so strongly in favour of freshly acquired properties; but we are more fortunate, for here there is no radical difference of opinion. Indeed, no one has any idea of the possibility of interfering with the purchasers of national domains. This unanimous wisdom should now be established and published aloud. Next, everyone is agreed that the indemnification of the former

owners in some other manner should be attended to. These two points being agreed to, it must be allowed that the form of expression is the best that creates security most certainly on one side, and peace on the other."

"Heaven forbid," answered M. Laîné, with that tone of a high and noble spirit that characterises his eloquence; "Heaven forbid that I should praise the cruel ability that dictated the article in question. What, gentlemen! should ancient rights, of such venerable nature and sacred titles, be made accomplices of an immense spoliation by confounding them together, so that they may seem to support each other? No, you will not come to that. Whatever terms you employ, whatever texture you give them, they will not prevail against the opinions that form the most intimate sense of property, against those ideas of justice and injustice that can alone maintain it. An ancient right will always be a right, and national possessions no more than national possessions; and you can already see that in spite of your prescriptions, your laws and menaces, public conscience is obstinate in making a difference. Your article, in whatever form it may be settled, will make no difference in that; it can do no good, and may do much harm. What is to be desired for the interests of peace and, I may add, public prosperity? Let the possessions of emigrants return to their former owners without trouble or shock. This way has opened of itself. Numerous transactions have now taken place, and do so every day, or fresh ones are prepared. That is what should be encouraged for the interests of the State; and far from that, if you adopt the proposed article, you adduce as many obstacles as you can; and, strange to say, the lot of the French who have been deprived through their fidelity to the House of Bourbon is made worse by the return of the princes of that house.

At least, leave this matter to the old laws, those of the Directory and the Empire, that certainly did not err on the side of indulgence, and, at a moment when the union of hearts is so desirable, fear to reduce fidelity to despair, and to irritate rashness, that companion of misfortune. I take the side of M. de Fontanes."

M. Faget de Baure, who had been set on the track by the consideration concluding the speech of M. Laîné, repeated in order the legal enactments that had been passed, with the intention of securing the confidence of the purchasers of national property. Then he passed to the judicial decisions on this head, and quoted some of especial severity against the emigrants. He inquired whether anything more could honestly be desired on this point. He did not conceal that the restoration would embolden the pretensions of the emigrants; but he showed, by reasons deduced from a wise foresight, that the strictness of legal precedent could not be diminished under the House of Bourbon. He finished by saying that, if another proof were wanted, it would be found in the article produced, and defended in the King's name by his representatives at the Council.

My position became embarrassing. I had to defend myself against powerful tilters, and without any hope of succour from my two colleagues. M. Ferrand advised me to say we would take the King's opinion on it; that is to say, abandon the article. Conscience forbade this course, from the motives I have mentioned, but which I could not reveal to the Commission. So I spoke again, quitted the paths of argument, where I could not have advanced with a firm step, and threw myself into facts. I announced that it was my duty to inform the Commission that the anxiety of purchasers of the national domains was general, and founded on what had taken place in more than one place. Then I detailed the list

of facts that had come to the Ministry of Police in a month, among which were some audacious attempts on the part of the emigrants. I saw by the tokens of astonishment exhibited by the Commission that I was making an impression, and that the majority, suspected of possessing at least Church property, would not be sorry for its passing. It was only now requisite to find an excuse. I found it in that immediately following the one under discussion. I read this article, purporting that the State might require the sacrifice of property for a cause of proved public interest, but with a preliminary indemnity, and I maintained that this article was applicable to the sacrifice that the State required of possessions confiscated on account of emigration, and that it rendered an indemnity necessary. The majority believed, or seemed to believe, that I was right, and the ninth article was passed.

The remaining articles encountered no opposition; only M. Félix Faulcon proposed an amendment to the twelfth article. The proposal was only, "The conscription is abolished." The amendment consisted in the addition of the proposal that the "method of recruiting the land and sea forces should be determined by law;" and on a short proof of its utility it was adopted.

Thus concluded the first chapter of the Constitution —that entitled Public Rights of the French. It had seemed to be in the right order of ideas and proprieties to begin by defining the rights of the French before proceeding to the form of Government, for these rights were independent of it. People have not fully observed all the grave import and liberality even in the arrangement of the chapters of this act. There is no declaration of the rights of man there, for such a declaration would have been nothing but a summons to revolt, too often responded to in France; but the rights of the

French are recognised and declared before all. The nation's part being thus assigned to it, nothing was left before them but royalty, and to that it belonged to declare how it would exercise rights for the future. So the rest comprised the new form of the King's Government, namely, a Chamber of Peers and a Chamber of Deputies, who must concur in legislative action; ministers and tribunals for the exercise of the executive power; and the last chapter was reserved for the recognition of certain especial rights required to be maintained for public peace. All in this bore the form of concession, but of concession dexterously arranged, and not coming till after the recognition of the public rights of the French. It would have been difficult to proceed with greater wisdom, or to adopt a better method.

The Commission, when it came to the chapter containing the forms of the King's Government, passed, with no further difficulties than some observations on the expressions, to the articles 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, and 18.

The 14th article, which was of great importance, comprehending in its general disposition the elements of executive power, concluded by reserving to the King the power of making rules and ordinances necessary for the execution of laws and the safety of the State. Was this article placed in the chapter respecting the King's Government with the intention of reserving to him a dictatorship over the extraordinary circumstances that arise in the government of States, and pass human foresight?

I think I can assert that this was not at all the intention of the Commission, nor of the preparers of the project on which the Commission deliberated. These last took the article, like some others, from previous constitutions, where they had existed, without leading to any consequences, reappearing on all occasions as

settled forms, and I do not fancy that they had been any more considered this time than before; but if each member of the Commission had been summoned to declare what he understood by these expressions, *to make the rules and ordinances necessary for the execution of the laws and security of the State*, he would have begun by putting out of the question any power of making laws, considering nothing more meant than the executive rules required by almost all laws in a country so large and so various in its features as France. Then he would have admitted the power of wielding the public force and making it act within or without, anywhere that security was menaced, but he would not have imagined the debate to have had any further scope; and it is because these rules, and this disposal of the public force, were the necessary attributes of executive power that they had always been admitted without discussion. It would have been quite different in the eyes of the Commission had there been any question of a dictatorship; that is to say, a union of all the powers of the State, in certain given cases, in the hands of its Prince.

However, this doctrine was applied under Louis XVIII. by the ordinance of the 24th of July, 1815, which determined the fate of a certain number of individuals, who incontestably had a right of defence before the tribunals against the charges brought against them; and by the ordinance of the 13th of July of the same year, which modified several articles of the Charter, increased the number of deputies, diminished the age required for entrance into the Chamber, and conferred a power of making electors on the prefects. Lastly, the system was persevered in, and even in the ordinance of September 5, 1816, which referred to the precedent; but then the immediate point was to escape from the remains of the crisis of the Hundred Days, in which the very existence

of France had been compromised; and from the midst of perils of that kind arose a dictatorship not requiring to be written down anywhere, with which the chief of the State naturally found himself invested. For him it was a strict duty in such a case to place himself above the laws, in order to save the laws themselves, and such a power need not be written down, and still less defined, for definition would only weaken it. At Rome a dictator was appointed, and that instant all other power ceased—his alone existed; and when afterwards the Senate adopted the famous formula "*caveant Consules*," &c., one charge only was required of the Consuls—to provide for the safety of the State.

These principles were solemnly proclaimed in the Chamber of Peers by the learned advocate of the law of the press, in 1828: during the discussion an imminent peril of the State had been spoken of.

The Count Siméon replied, "In such a peril as supposed, the King, and consequently his Government, are all-powerful; the law need not reserve to him what he holds from his right as supreme head of the State. If there be imminent danger, the dictatorship is his. Thus it signifies little enough whether it was desired or not to insert this dictatorship in the 14th article of the Charter, and whether it be there or not. But, it will be persisted, by what signs may the peril be recognised? Who shall be the judge of its imminence? The answer is, that in such a serious state of things there will be a quantity of patent facts that can escape no one. Besides, the King is necessarily the judge of the imminence of peril, because he is in the best position to judge, and most concerned to extinguish it. There is also the responsibility of his counsellors to guard against any abuse he might make of his position. Lastly, if all that be not sufficient, the reason is, that there is always some

loophole in every institution which is not given for human intelligence to penetrate beforehand."

In the project laid before the Commission the power of proposing laws by either of the Chambers did not exist, so that there was to be found a very near approach to the exclusive initiative and sanction reserved to the King.

M. Garnier opposed the united presence of these two regulations. He said, "I cannot conceive how the exclusive initiative of the laws and their sanction can both be placed in the hands of the King. If the King alone proposes laws, apparently he will only propose wise ones; and what is the use of again giving him the power of sanction, that is to say approbation, of his own work? There is in this a double action on the same point, which seems useless, and even ridiculous; but let us look to the bottom—what is to take place between these two boundaries of initiation and sanction? The deliberation of the Chambers,—and about what? Only what the King pleases to submit to them. I can plainly see that they will also have the power to refuse their vote to a law that they consider bad, but they have none to introduce a law they may consider good and even necessary. Either I know nothing about it, or there is only half of the representative system there; or rather this system is quite lost, for it consists in not only preserving the country from bad laws, but in procuring good ones. I see the Chambers necessarily reduced to a position of mere consultation, a position that might become dangerous if evil-disposed Chambers were obstinately to refuse anything proposed by the King; and powerless for any kind of good, as they can propose nothing of themselves."

The Abbé de Montesquiou replied, "I must support the concurrence of the articles proposed in the interest of the royal prerogative, and that of the country.

Whatever period of history be referred to, from the Capitularies to 1789, the Crown is to be found in possession of the power of proposing laws; and as the excellence of French law has been praised, even by the foremost of foreign jurists, the forms that contributed to its perfection should not be abandoned. Doubtless the French are endued with admirable qualities, but it must be allowed that they are sharp, impatient, and that with them the first moment is dangerously seductive; that if every member of the Chamber has a right to propose a law, it will be enough for him to obtain the support of some influential orators, and to seize the moment to carry the assembly further than it could have expected or desired to go. I know that the deliberation of a second Chamber and the royal sanction would provide a counterpoise and remedy; but public opinion might be gained by some proposal concealing a real danger under the veil of popular interest, minds would be carried away, there would be external agitation, intrigues would take place between the Chamber that had proposed the law and the two other branches of legislative power, and these need to be free. I appeal to the conscience of those members of the Commission who were of the two former assemblies. Have they not seen these assemblies so violent that they had to regret next morning the decree passed the day before? What profited Louis XVI. the right of sanction that had been decreed to him with such solemnity, and the free exercise of which had been so often and vainly guaranteed to him? Royalty, despoiled of the initiative, remained without arms, and quickly sank under the shafts of the factions. Thus the King who has profoundly meditated on this fundamental article of the monarchy, has declared to us that he will never forego a single right inherent in his crown, and that he thinks to be one of the essentials of public

order, and the first condition of the tranquillity of his people.

"Now I pass to the sanction. No one can think of separating this act from royalty, which in some ways is one of its constituents and reveals it to the people. But it may be said, the Chambers thus closed in between the initiative and sanction will be nothing but a kind of necessary council. Yes, but it will be a public council that speaks in the name of the nation, and whose advice, when wise, it will be almost impossible to repel; a council that will have the power of rejecting what does not suit it; a council that will have a right surpassing all others—that of granting taxes. Well, gentlemen, there is representative power, as much as is necessary for the French! Recollect that this power, when once implanted in a nation, always tends to extension. The English Chambers were nothing more, in their commencement, but forced councils, which the kings most reluctantly called together; and look at them now! All was compromised and soon lost in 1789, when royalty was left bare in order to confer all power on a deliberative assembly. Let us thank the King for keeping us at a long distance from such an excess. We must never lose sight of this, that here the question is that of trying a new form of Government. I delight to believe that the attempt will succeed; but if we are to experience more shocks, let us leave the power of reducing them to this throne that has so long and so gloriously sheltered our fathers."

The discussion remained long directed to this point. MM. Barbé-Marbois, de Semonville, Chabaud-Latour, Félix Faulcon, defended the system that the Chambers ought to share the initiative with the King, taking severe precautions against their abusing this power, and each of the speakers detailed the kind of precautions that he considered preferable. M. de Pastoret spoke last. From

the commencement he granted to the Abbé Montesquiou the danger of permitting the initiative of laws to a French assembly, if this power were not surrounded with such delays, precautions, and forms as might restrain the impetuosity of the national character; but he added that it seemed very difficult to him to entirely deprive the Chambers of the means of expressing the public desire on the necessity or great suitability of a law. It would not be accurate to say that the nation had been deprived of this power in old times. Without going back further, it was exercised in the States-General under the form of complaints, griefs, the presentation of instructions to the deputies; and this form of the initiative was not without consequences, for in that way were procured the edicts of Blois and Romorantin, the ordinance of Orleans, &c.; and the preambles of these laws prove it. When, in course of time, the rights of the States-General seemed made over to the sovereign courts, the initiative was reproduced under new forms. So there is here a kind of tradition in favour of the country. Complaint is natural to the suffering, and it is very necessary that by some way or other they should approach the power whence they expect a remedy. Thus under all governments, some form of initiative is recognised. In restricted governments it is exercised by means analogous to the nature of the government; under despotism, by revolts and conflagrations. However, when the point is to settle the forms of a representative government for France, it is indispensable to give to the Chambers a portion of the initiative, however restricted it be; otherwise there is danger of seeing them claim it by irregular means, of which oratory has made them aware.

During the discussion, in which no one had supported the system of the King's representatives, the Count

de Vimar had passed a note to me couched in these words :—

"It would be unfortunate for you to be obliged to tell the King that the whole Commission displayed opinions contrary to those of His Majesty; could not they be reconciled by granting to the Chamber of Deputies power to supplicate the King to propose a law when solicited by public wish? I only give you a notion; see if you can make something of it."

I placed the note before the eyes of my colleague, M. Ferrand, and he said he concurred in M. Vimar's advice, and wished me to speak and submit it to the Commission. I pointed out to M. Ferrand that it was suitable that he should himself take charge of it, because such a proposition would have more weight coming from his mouth than mine, and we should avoid at the Commission the explosion of anger sure to come from the Abbé Montesquiou, if he found me in his way, contradicting him the least in the world. M. Ferrand yielded to these reasons, and wrote out the proposition almost exactly in the terms of M. de Vimar's note. He read it to the Commission, where, in the main, it obtained unanimous approbation; but thence arose several questions.

Should the power of supplicating the King to propose a law solicited by the public wish belong only to the Chamber of Deputies, or be common to both Chambers?

If the power be common to both Chambers, might not the King find himself embarrassed between two different propositions, simultaneously emanating from the two Chambers?

Should the power of the Chambers be limited to the proposal of laws solicited by public desire? By what signs should this public desire be recognised, and how proved?

Would not the discussion of these propositions in the Chamber of Deputies absorb all its attention, and the interest of the public admitted to its sittings, so that it would only discuss the projects for laws submitted in the King's name with negligence?

What delays should interpose between the presentation to the Chambers of a request to be made to the King, its discussion, and despatch to His Majesty?

What forms ought to be introduced to insure a deliberate examination on the part of the Chambers?

Lastly, as the demand to be submitted to the King brought no necessary consequences, should not a period be fixed after which the silence of the throne should be equivalent to a refusal?

The Commission adjourned to the next day the discussion of these questions, because the sitting had been long and wearisome, and it was necessary to know the King's intention before going deeper into the matter. At the opening of the sitting on May 24th, the Chancellor announced that he had given the King an account of the discussion that took place in the Commission, and had asked his orders, and that His Majesty persisted in not relaxing anything of the right of initiation that he regarded as a jewel of his crown; but after having carefully considered the point of allowing to the Chambers a power of supplicating the King to propose a law that might seem useful to them, the King had found in it a recognition of, rather than an encroachment upon, the royal initiative; that, in reality, this power had, from all time, been exercised in France in one form or other; that His Majesty only wished for the Commission to take suitable precautions for the preservation of its exercise from any unbecoming use in future.

The question was thus clearly put in the declaration made by the Chancellor in the King's name; the

discussion so became more easy; and it was determined, first, that the prayer to propose a law addressed to the King might extend to any object, and even point out what it seemed desirable for the law to contain. Thus the power would be applicable to all matters, and could at need descend to the details of the desired law; that was as near an approach to the initiative as was possible or permissible. It was next felt that it would be giving too much advantage to the Chamber of Deputies, already in possession of several, to grant this power to it alone; therefore the permission was granted to both Chambers, and lest the exercise thereof in the Chamber of Deputies should become a popular bait for the ambitious, it was decided that in such case the discussion should take place in closed committee. Here the Commission was checked by the question, whether each Chamber might present the request for a law direct to the King; but here the difficulty arose, that the two Chambers being composed of different elements, and bound to support interests not always likely to be agreed, it was possible that each Chamber might present contrary projects on the same subject. In this case the throne would indeed play the part of a mediator between the Chambers. There would be importance in this, but also danger in moments of excitement, when the King might have to decide between a Chamber where progress was natural and that whose first duty was conservatism. M. Faget de Baure, having clearly displayed the difficulty, pointed out the solution of it by causing the proposal of a request to the King to be passed from one Chamber to the other, and to make each Chamber deliberate on it successively, just as upon the project for a law. Advantages of more than one kind attached to this plan. Concert between the two branches of the legislative power sprang from it naturally, because the proposition

could not be submitted to the King, unless adopted by both Chambers, and when once this consent was gained, very strong reasons would be requisite to enable the Crown to refuse its initiative, so that it was making the Chambers participate in an indirect manner, and perhaps preferable to any other. The Commission unanimously adopted this view.

However, M. de Semonville also desired to make provision against the case—rare enough, indeed—of the two Chambers coming to an understanding to demand of the King laws in successive strokes. Recalling the dangerous precipitancy of the decrees of the Constituent Assembly, and the still more perilous haste of the Legislative Assembly's decrees of urgency, he proposed to provide for this by stipulating that the demand for a proposal of a law that had arisen in one Chamber, and been adopted there, should not be sent up to the other Chamber until the expiration of a period of ten days. This clause also passed nearly unanimously. M. Blanquart de Bailleul called attention to the necessity of also foreseeing a case where one of the two Chambers, having sent a proposition for a law to the other, and meeting with refusal, should return to the charge several times at short intervals, thus setting up a kind of contention, not free from danger, or, at least, from scandal, and it was decided that when a proposition adopted by one Chamber had been rejected by the other, it could not be reproduced in the same session. Lastly, the Commission paused a moment on the question whether it were useful to insert in the Constitution that there should be no necessary result from demands laid before the King, and that the mere silence of the Crown for a given time should be a sufficient intimation of rejection. But it was observed that this arrangement arose of course, since the Chambers only proceeded by way of

supplication to the King, and that any clause open to a suspicion that the King's liberty would be the least in the world affected—yes, even one declaring silence to be rejection—would be an infringement on the prerogative that the Commission wished and ought to preserve perfectly entire.

The task of reducing to form all the decisions arrived at, was sent to me with an intimation that I was to make it as clear and short as possible. I found some difficulty in this. The forms imposed on the proposition for a law had accumulated unobserved during the discussion, and it was not easy to make them act from one Chamber to the other, or from the two Chambers to the King. I was obliged to expend upon it three articles, which I had to turn in a dozen different ways before I discovered the order in which they are detailed under numbers 19, 20, and 21 of the Charter. The Commission adopted my form, but still I am not quite satisfied with it. I think M. Benjamin Constant was more happy when he had to express the same intention in the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth articles of the additional enactment of 1815. It is true, as he agreed with me, that he would not have been the clearer of the two but for the pains I had taken. This politician of incontestable ability has praised the kind of indirect initiative, the invention of which belongs to the Charter Commission, and was built up out of the discussion to which this matter was then subjected. He only found fault with the condition of the private committee; but excepting for this, if we had the least understanding of our own business, there would be but little difference between the indirect initiative granted to the Chambers and the direct initiative reserved to the King.

The twenty-second article recognised the King's exclusive right to the sanction and promulgation of laws.

The twenty-third article, relating to the Civil List, did not appear in the project presented by the King's representatives. It was proposed by M. Clausel de Coussergues. The orator said—"It may be easily imagined that the King, entirely taken up with such lofty thoughts as are the foundation of the liberty and happiness of his people, could not descend from them to considerations of private interest. Thus in the project laid before you, there is nothing to be found that makes mention of the Civil List. Noble and touching forgetfulness in this family, heirs of an immense patrimony, which would extend over one half of France, had they not in succession devoted it to the defence and prosperity of the State. But if it was dignified in Louis XVIII. to forget this, it is our duty to remember it. So I propose to add to the chapter under discussion, an article in these words, 'The Civil List is fixed for the whole duration of the reign by the first meeting of the Legislature after the King's accession.' I admit the Civil List as pre-established, because, I repeat, it is nothing but a slight indemnity for the relinquishment that, since the commencement of the third race, our kings have made to the State, of the immense domains they have successively received by inheritance; but I annex to the Civil List this condition, that it must be fixed by the first meeting of the Legislature after the King's accession. Besides the King's right, resulting from the circumstances I have just detailed, you will find, gentlemen, weighty considerations against allowing the Civil List to be every year discussed in the Chambers. I certainly do not rank together the accession of King William to the throne of Great Britain, and the return of Louis XVIII.; but let us remember the perpetual irritation between William and the House of Commons, occasioned by their obstinacy in only voting the Civil List for one year, and

that he himself did not hesitate to declare that he should not really think himself king till his Civil List had been fixed for life, and such, in fact, was his continual dependence on the Commons, that Europe said of him that he was King of Holland, but nothing but Stadtholder in England. Far be it from me to suspect that Louis XVIII. has anything of the sort to fear from his subjects. Besides the powerful and active affection that attaches us to the blood of our kings, vast respect and vast gratitude rally us around him whom we have recovered. But the French are especially distinguished by a delicate sentiment of propriety, a lofty generosity, that will not endure certain kinds of investigation and control. Now would it not wound this feeling to submit every year the personal expenses of the monarch to the public discussion of the Chambers? Perhaps the opposition would use it as a weapon, and let us not forget that royalty is like a tender flower, that withers when touched on a certain point."

The Chancellor said that he could do nothing but applaud the intention that animated M. Clausel de Coussergues, and the manner in which he had put it forth; but that as the project on which the Commission was summoned to deliberate contained nothing relative to the Civil List, he could not put the question without having taken the King's orders.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Chamber of Peers—Constitution of the Years III. and VIII.—Royal Princes in the Chamber of Peers—The Chamber of Deputies—Nomination and Return of Members—Qualifications of Electors and Candidates—The Land Tax—Publicity of the Sittings of the Chamber of Deputies—The Right of Petition—Appointment of Judges—Distribution of Tribunals—Removability of Magistrates—Private Rights Guaranteed by the State.

THE Commission next passed to the third chapter of the Constitution, entitled, On the Chamber of Peers. This chapter passed without discussion from the twenty-fourth to the thirty-first article. These constituted the peerage. Minds had been long prepared for this institution. Clear-sighted men had come to the States-General, with a hope of endowing France with it. Matters were then in excellent train. We had in reserve those ancient ecclesiastical peerages, contemporaneous with the second race of our kings, and not extinct at the same time. The princes of the House of France, with their rich appanage, could resume and worthily bear the titles of Burgundy, Normandy, Aquitaine, Flanders, and Toulouse. The modern peerage, dating from the sixteenth century, was not without splendour; it held a distinguished rank at Court, and had preserved the right of sitting in parliament. The families possessed of it also owned the largest estates in France. The nobles of the Court, next in precedence to the peers, were rich and respected, and when there was a likelihood of the fortune of any of these families falling short,

there were always ready means of restoration, by marriage with the most wealthy plebeians. Lastly, the clergy were in possession of immense property and great reputation, and in the highest class appeared men wise, eloquent, and eminently adapted for business. There was everything necessary for the establishment of a Chamber of Peers, a match for that of England in historical interest. There were three obstacles in the way. First, the Court: it had long been the received opinion at Versailles, that there was no comparison to be made in the greatness or power of a King of England and of France. There was some truth in this notion, confirmed by the comparison of what had passed in the two countries during the course of the sixteenth century. It was, therefore, excessively displeasing to the King and royal family to endeavour to institute a comparison between the Constitution of France and that of England, and the least step in that direction was considered *lèse majesté*. M. Necker, for instance, was supposed to incline towards the English Constitution, and really had publicly praised it, and this reason held the first place among those that had rendered him personally disagreeable to Louis XVI. But the events that followed the meeting of the States-General, warned the Court that it was encountering a revolution, and moderated its repugnance. It was then that some sensible persons in the three orders endeavoured to procure the adoption of a higher Chamber. At their head may be pointed out the Bishop of Langres, La Luzerne; the Archbishop of Bordeaux, De Cicé; M. Clermont Tonnerre, De Lally Tollendal, Monnier, Malouet; but they met with two kinds of obstacles in the States-General, now become the National Assembly. The provincial nobles were there in great numbers, and this class of nobility could not forgive those of the Court the superiority they claimed. A poor noble, buried in

his castle, would measure the genealogy of a Court lord against his own, compare his ancestors with those of a duke, and in reality find his the most ancient, and often justly the most honourable. It was their received opinion that all nobles were equal in rank, and that the prince next the throne was only the first gentleman of the kingdom. This pretension, or rather opinion, was founded on the ancient constitution of the State. The nobles had never appeared at the States-General of right; even the dukes and princes had no appointed place. The members of the order of nobility, like those of the Third Estate, came there by the election of their equals or their peers. Thence came that old indomitable feeling of equality, against which neither the certificates of Cherin could avail, nor the right of carriages, nor the blue and red ribands. And anyone willing to examine it closely, would find that what we consider as prejudice, and overwhelm with our modern contempt, most frequently derives its origin from the manners of our fathers and the monuments of their wisdom. However it be, the project of an upper Chamber met with as many determined enemies in the order of nobility as at the States-General, as there were nobles there who had no hope of gaining ground out of the Chamber, and did not wish at any price to see a nobility of higher rank than their own. There was a similar opposition, and greater if possible, in the order of the Third Estate.

There the passion for equality, of which the Abbé Sièyes had been the first apostle, daily expanded. They demolished nobility there piecemeal with remarkable emulation, before coming to the time when, on the motion of a Montmorency, they should endeavour to destroy it entirely, even to the titles. So a project opposed on all sides had to be given up. For some time there had been hopes of its resumption, or at least the

division of the Legislative Body into two Chambers, or the revision of the Constitution in 1791. But the unhappy journey to Varennes had so augmented the power of the opposite party that all that could be done was to snatch from it the king's person while sacrificing royalty. Then came the Legislative Assembly; and then the dangers of a single assembly were displayed, and fearfully. The remedy for this was everywhere sought, and not perceived anywhere but in a new revision of the Constitution with a division of the Legislative Body into two Chambers. Ministers of that time, old members of the Constituent Assembly, and some members of the Legislative Assembly, secretly united in this design. Louis XVI. did not assent to it, and seemed to entrench himself at all risks in the strict execution of the Constitution; but the Queen, with more foresight, always searching for safety anywhere rather than in emigration, did not remain alien to this project. It was disconcerted by publicity. The name of Austrian Committee was applied to the combination which had put it forward, and its members were pursued with such hostility that not one who could be caught, such as MM. de Lessart, Dutertre, Duport, Delaporte, Barnave Chapelier, escaped death. At last the horrors of the Convention came to an end. That infamous assembly was tumultuously required to conclude with a Constitution, and it proceeded to the business more successfully than anyone could venture to hope from its antecedents. The Constitution of the year III. divided the Legislative Body into two sections, and though there was no difference but the qualification of age and marriage between the Council of Five Hundred and the Ancients, the good effect of the division was soon seen. The laws, having undergone discussion and deliberation twice over, resumed their true character. Some still

appear with honour in our codes; and if other storms arose under this Constitution, they should be attributed less to the manner in which the legislative power was then organised than to the imperfection of the executive power, and especially to the kind of men whom it had been judged necessary to call to it. The Abbé Sièyes altered it all in the Constitution of the year VIII., confused everything, and made up something to his fancy. It would have been ridiculous if one could have jested on such a matter, to contemplate this wild metaphysician explaining his system of a Constitution by means of the lines that furrowed the palm of his hand, then the play of the different powers by the extension or unfolding of his fingers; and if he were asked for a division into chapters, articles, or anything of more substance than the signs of a professor of chiromancy, the great man smiled with pity and shrugged his shoulders. But these conjuring tricks were interpreted by the patience and rare ability of Daunon, into Tribunes who were always to speak, Deputies who were always to keep silence, a Grand Elector to elect everything, and a Senate to preserve everything. Happily a man was there who at first combated everything that he thought absurd. He soon felt that it was wiser to accept it, as it would be all the easier course to get rid of it afterwards. They made a show of trying this Constitution; but Napoleon demolished it bit by bit, and left nothing to the bodies politic that he deigned to preserve, but their dresses and honours, and the privilege of at times paying him very humble salutations. The time of this magnificent master does not count in the history of our institutions, but only in that of our victories. As soon as France could take breath from the confusion of his reign, and hope for liberty, the old ideas reappeared, strengthened by all the weight that the painful experi-

ence of contrary ones gave to them. All minds were agreed in looking for the pledge of a good Government, in the division of the Legislative Body into two Chambers. It was found in the Constitution presented by the Senate. There was nothing to do but change the name of the Senate into that of Chamber of Peers, and this second appellation would agree better with our history; and if not with the rights, at least with the pretensions of families that came forward with titles of old peerages.

I have somewhat extended my observations here, in order to show why a chapter so important as the constitution of the peerage was considered without opposition. One member of the Commission, M. Félix Faulcon, expressed doubts on the possibility of finding in France, in its actual condition, a sufficient number of families possessed of everything requisite to support a hereditary peerage worthily. I answered that it might be foreseen that the King would at first name peers for life, and would only grant the power of inheritance in moderation, and when his Majesty was assured that the family that he thus brought near the Crown was in such circumstances as to be worthy to receive and transmit this deposit of a portion of the sovereignty. M. Semonville then desired to speak to propose an additional article in this form. "Princes can only sit in the Chamber by the King's order, expressed in a message, for each session, on pain of nullifying everything done in their presence." M. de Semonville said, "The Government, whose basis the King has allowed us to discuss, will necessarily allow of parties; but in order that these parties may never change into factions, means of prevention must be placed in the hand of the King. Our history tells us that from the fourteenth century to the end of the eighteenth the presence of princes of the blood has

had a most dangerous influence in times of trouble or during a minority, and that it has more than once placed the State within an ace of destruction. From experience, France knows that the princes of the blood cannot be allowed to share in representative government without precaution, and the best way is to make the King umpire of the part they should take in it. He will allow them to take a full share, when the State walks freely on this new soil, and the Chambers are only occupied in calmly laying the foundations of public prosperity. Then the princes of the blood will come and balance our deliberations with all the weight of their elevated position; but if new storms await us in the future, the King must have the power of putting the princes aside, for the benefit of the State and of themselves. It would be indeed difficult to mention a French prince in whom a spirit of faction and revolt has met with success; and yet here, as elsewhere, the example has had few converts, for the virtuous Louis XII. had to pardon himself the faults of the Duke of Orleans. It is a real service to these princes to place them in a position where they may be the perpetual hope of the throne, and can never become subjects of uneasiness or danger to it."

The Chancellor said that the article proposed by M. Semonville being an addition to the project approved by the King, he could not allow it to be debated without having taken His Majesty's orders, and the more that the subject of the article related peculiarly to the royal family.

At the end of the third sitting the Chancellor announced that he had submitted to the King the two additional articles proposed, one by M. Clausel de Coussergues, relating to the Civil List; and the other by M. de Semonville, on the presence of the princes in the

Chamber of Peers, and that His Majesty permitted that these articles should be discussed. M. Clausel de Coussergues read again the article on the Civil List, and it was adopted unanimously. The same was not entirely the case with that proposed by M. de Semonville.

M. Boissy d'Anglas said, "This article is of the greatest importance. If accepted as proposed, it makes the position of the princes inferior to that of simple peers; for, I ask, who would ever give his consent to become one, on condition of only appearing in the Chamber at the will of the Crown, and as often as the Crown chose? Such a state of things would extinguish all a peer's independence, and make his presence in the Chamber useless to the public and unbearable to himself. However, the intention of the project presented to us is not to debase the princes of the blood to such an extent; but rather manifestly to elevate them, for they are declared peers by the very right of their birth, and made sit in the Chamber at the head of all others: and the reasons for this preference arise from our historical documents. At the commencement of the third dynasty, the princes were the only lay peers of the kingdom. In proportion as their principalities became confounded with the property of the Crown, they were replaced as peers by the princes of the blood, and it is necessary to come down to the sixteenth century to find a peer created beyond the royal family. I allow that these matters of history are not rights; but they are not to be despised if they can throw a light on the matter in question, and no more must they be contradicted, when an institution like that of the Peerage is under consideration, deriving its authority from time. Yes, the princes of the blood have often displayed turbulence, and sometimes factiousness; but is it not just to give its own share of blame to the period? In ancient times there was

nothing fixed in the constitution of the State. During certain intervals, when the laws were unrestrained, all order had disappeared, and force was the only means of obtaining the redress of grievances, whether plausible or real, it is not surprising that the princes of the royal family found themselves, through their exalted rank, representatives of public discontent, and thus went astray. There is nothing of the kind to fear in future, and as the great interests of the State will now come regularly to their conclusion in the Chambers, I cannot see what distrust can be inspired by the presence of the princes of the blood in the Chamber of Peers, where they will have no other influence to exercise than that in which now true power is to be found; that is to say, talents and virtues."

The opinion of M. Boissy d'Anglas had made an impression on the Commission. Two members had supported him in succession (MM. Duhamel and Chabaud-Latour), and adding new reasons to those already given, he had shown that the article was not in the beginning adopted by the King, and yet that he was the best judge of the part that the members of his family ought to take in the Constitution; that if His Majesty had been willing to allow it to be discussed, it was a new proof of his confidence that the Commission could not recognise better than in abstaining from deliberation on the article and submitting it entirely to His Majesty's wisdom. M. de Semonville spoke again in defence of his proposition. He said, "I agree that the Representative Government promises more stability to France, and quieter times than when the princes of the blood played parts so dangerous to the State; but we shall be making trial of this Government for some time longer. Will it be established easily and peacefully? We can hardly believe so. To speak the truth, these reasons are as yet no

more than hopes, and, till they be fully realised, the distance will be slight, and the descent easy from party to faction. The Commission has done justice to the feeling of propriety that has prevented me from seeking for examples nearer to us; it feels that it would have been easy for me to prove that Representative Government, as long as it is only on trial, is far from being a defence from the dangers I fear. I always ask lessons from the past in such matters. The war of the Fronde would never have gone as far as the combat of Saint Antoine if the princes of the blood had not enlarged the resistance by their presence in Parliament. In the following century, their presence, and the transcendent eloquence of one of them contributed to make what was at first nothing but a question of competence into a catastrophe that ruined the Parliament itself and shook the monarchy. I remain equally silent on more modern times. The Commission will understand it and will not be astonished if still under the influence of my recollections, I strongly persist in my proposition."

The Commission was divided on coming to vote, but the majority gave their suffrages for the proposition, and it became the thirty-first article of the Constitution, and the next chapter was taken in hand, entitled "Of the Chamber of Deputies."

The first article, ordaining that the Chamber of Deputies should be composed of deputies elected by the electoral colleges, and their organisation determined by law, gave rise to some discussion. The Abbé Montesquiou proposed a system of election rather different from that presented by the Government project; he begged the Commission to consider whether it would not be preferable to grant the nomination of the deputies to the King, who might exercise it nearly in the same form as the Senate does at present.

He said, "The King is, without doubt, the person most interested in the proper composition of the Chamber of Deputies: so there need be no doubt of his interest in the choice being good. Is it feared that it would fall on courtiers, or enemies of public liberty? The King could not do this, even if he wished it. It is not quite so common in France to play tricks with conscience as people would wish to say, and public opinion will not cease equally to restrain the King and his subjects. Remember the Assembly of Notables. To read the list of them it would be supposed that the King had limited his choice to courtiers who were connected with him, to officers who owed their condition to him, to magistrates whom he had raised in their order to the highest steps of power and reputation; and yet in that assembly, which had no title but the King's confidence, an opposition was seen to arise that overthrew the Ministry* which had called it into being, and acted contrary to the original intention. And certainly the difference is great between an assembly that is in some sort confidential, and a Chamber of Deputies that will have recognised rights, and discuss the interest of the State under the combined influence of sitting in public, and the liberty of the press. Gentlemen, let us take heart: as long as ten Frenchmen meet to attend to public business, we shall not want an opposition."

M. Boissy d'Anglas could not agree to this proposal. He thought it would not stand the least examination. He said, "The King, in the new system, names the Chamber of Peers. Indeed, this distinguished right can do no otherwise than attach to the Crown. If he appoints the Chamber of Deputies besides, we have no longer a representative system, but one of royal commissions. I see nothing in this but the authority of one

* That of Vergennes and Calonne (Alison).

person alone wrapped up in forms and words intended to mislead, and which might well be spared. The Assembly of Notables could be no authority, and rather told against M. de Montesquiou's proposition. That assembly was nothing but a focus of aristocratic intrigue. As was to be expected, it caused the dismissal of the Minister who convoked it, because he could find no other resources but the subjecting of privileged bodies to territorial contributions; and when once rid of that Minister who was often wrong, but was then in the right, the Assembly of the Notables opposed useful improvements, and increased the embarrassment it should have put a stop to. The same might well occur, allowing for the great changes that had since taken place in France, with a Chamber of Deputies named by the King."

M. de Pastoret was also against the proposal; he denied the identity that was averred to exist between an Assembly of Notables directly named by the King on the suggestion of his Minister, and such members of the Chamber of Deputies as the King, in the stead of the Senate, could only choose from candidates nominated by assemblies of cantons and districts; but he thought that even with this precaution, the King's intervention in this would not be without danger. To speak the truth, the discussion would be on an entirely new system, and, if adopted, all the different arrangements already settled would have to be brought into accordance with it. He thought that the system that most naturally presented itself would consist in establishing a first assembly, or district assembly, which should present candidates to a second assembly, or departmental assembly, and that this should name the deputies. There would be nothing more to do than to settle the qualifications for either assembly.

M. Clausel de Coussergues thought it would be easy to come to a determination on this matter at once. He proposed that the first assembly should be composed of the three hundred most heavily taxed in the district, and the second of the three hundred most considerable taxpayers in the department; he considered that the nomination of the members of the Chamber of Deputies is a matter of property; he explained all the checks in this system, and maintained it would be sought in vain elsewhere.

M. Barbé-Marbois said that the same end could be reached by a still more simple means, that of laying on the cantons the preparation of a list of candidates from which the departmental assembly should name the deputies.

M. Garnier considered the proposition of M. Pastoret as the easiest, and more approaching to the forms of election in use at present in France. He said that the forms of election are all more or less perilous; that their merit can only be appreciated by practice, and, that if precedents can be found to elucidate the question, they must be attended to for fear of imagining something worse.

M. Blanquart de Bailleul thought that the evident necessity of inserting the principal bases of the electoral system was plain from the discussion. I replied that these bases were supplied by the qualification of age for electors and candidates, and the amount of taxes that both ought to pay, but that the King's Commissioners would not refuse to inquire whether it would be proper to supplicate His Majesty to determine more particularly the principal forms of election; and, after the sitting, my colleagues charged me to examine what ought to be done.

The rest of the chapter met with but little serious

difficulty in discussion, because it did nothing but sanction what was in existence; and so the 36th article passed without discussion. This commenced with the 37th article, which proposed, "that the deputies should be elected for five years, and so that one-fifth of the Chamber should be renewed yearly." M. Garnier pointed out that the renewal of a fifth was a novelty that might be combined with the system just disappearing, but he did not clearly perceive its connection with the new system. The total duration of the functions is very limited. If from this time to the expiration of the first five years, it is no more for three-fifths of the Chamber than one, two, and three years, it would be difficult for the deputies to obtain a real knowledge of business in such a short time, especially in the matter of the receipts and expenditure of the State. The Ministers themselves could not adopt a regular progress, for they would require a majority in the Chamber for that, and that it, when once gained, should not abandon them as long as they persevered in their system; but they lost all certainty, and even prospect, of the future if this majority might annually break up, and introduce enough new deputies into the Chamber to oppose the system followed, and not enough to substitute another. In such a combination there is nothing to be found but an occasion of uncertainty, weakness, and trickery for the Minister and Chamber itself. So there is no advantage in that, and, consequently, no compensation for the grave inconvenience of making an agitation in France every year by the elections. The moment of these elections is always a time of crisis to a representative Government. If it has its advantages, it has dangers also, and care must be taken not to make that condition habitual in France. In the orator's opinion there should be an entire renewal after five years. He again said that he thought this duration of a

Chamber seemed to him too short, and that it should be increased to seven years.

M. Laîné replied, "I do not think that the renewal of a fifth every year would be so destitute of advantages as it seems to the last speaker. I agree with him that, in the kind of government whose bases we are discussing, the moment of elections is a moment of crisis, and the intensity of this crisis is measured by the character of the people, or the actual passions that are agitating them. It will also be granted to me that there is inherent in the French character a generous vivacity that makes it tend towards great things, but it may also go astray, and a mode of partial renewal to prevent the commotion of general elections would have to be invented for it, if this had not been already done. It is true that these partial elections will renew some excitement every year in the social body; but it will be a gentle agitation, that will make its presence known, but cause no disturbance. I do not know if we shall reach, or if we could reach, the institution long tried in a neighbouring country, of a ministry with a majority in the Chamber, receiving all its impulses from that combination. We must, perhaps, especially at first, content ourselves with forming a desire that the Government should pay appropriate homage to public opinion, and always tend to proceed in accordance with it. By the election as now proposed opinion has a legal means of manifesting itself every year. If, notwithstanding its reality and justice, it should not prevail one year, the next it will add a second testimony to the first, and end by triumphing, but by gentle and gradual means, in my opinion, far preferable to those violent commotions that might more speedily reach their end, but always run the risk of going beyond it; and if it were permissible to make momentary considerations follow those that rule

all time, I would venture to add that France is interested in the preservation of the existing Chamber, and perpetuating the excellent spirit that animates it, in the five series that will be successively summoned to replace it. This Chamber has not ceased to cultivate patriotism and the noble sentiments inspired thereby during times of difficulty; its voice has not been wanting to France, whenever an issue occurred when it should make itself heard; and because it has suffered and dared in other times, it has deserved to show all that it is worthy of, under the empire of the laws and liberty."

The opinion of M. Laîné led the debate, and the article was adopted. The Commission passed to the articles 38 and 39, that make the qualification to the Chamber at an assessment of forty pounds to the land-tax, and to the electoral suffrage twelve pounds. These two articles were attacked in their general arrangement by M. Félix Faulcon; he said, "Never in all the different constitutions that have come in succession since 1789 has the notion of so high a qualification been conceived. Has there been sufficient reflection on the number and sort of men that will be excluded from the Chamber of Deputies, the most noble subject of emulation that can be offered to the French? You have just deliberated on a Chamber of Peers, destined to receive the notabilities of France in services, by birth, and by fortune. If you likewise require this last qualification for the Chamber of Deputies, you will found an aristocratic government, from which a crowd of good men will find themselves excluded, honest functionaries that for thirty years have given their time to public affairs, without seeking any other salary than the sense of the good that they have done, and the gratitude of their fellow-citizens; and I am not afraid to instance myself as an example. As a member of the Consti-

tuent Assembly, I have not ceased from that time to give my time to my country, as long as I could with honour. I am now President of the Legislative Body, and because some honourable recollections and a noble poverty are all that remain to me, I am no longer eligible. I judge, by the pain I feel, what those who are like me are likely to feel."

No one spoke to refute M. Félix Faulcon, because while sharing his regrets, no one shared his opinion; so it was upon me that fell the task of consoling him rather than refuting. It was not difficult to me to establish, what the Commission was quite convinced of, that the maintenance of property was the essential aim of society, whence arose the necessity of only summoning proprietors to govern the highest interests. It only remained to examine what amount of property was sufficient to warrant the capacity and interest of those who should be summoned. I endeavoured to show that, in the social position of France, the qualification of paying twelve pounds of land-tax to become an elector, and forty pounds to be eligible, was not exorbitant. There would be more reason in maintaining that it was insufficient at the present time, and would diminish every day by the increase of capital, the multiplication of the representative signs of value, and the relative diminution of the price of the metals gold and silver; wherefore it might perhaps have been desirable to reduce the qualification to a determinate quantity of some food, as wheat, rather than expressing it in a sum of money. Without doubt this qualification might exclude from the Chamber a man who might have illuminated it with his genius, or honoured it by his virtues, but such is the necessary imperfection of general laws, that it is rare that while they provide for the interest of the largest number, they do not do injury to some private interests;

and of whatever utility a man of genius might be in the Chamber of Deputies, it could not balance, generally speaking, the danger of opening the door to others than owners of property offering the qualification required by law. But, lastly, if the position of being a member of the Chamber of Deputies is without comparison the most glorious course that a citizen can follow in civil employment, there remain honourable offices that are not below recognised merit, and might serve to exercise noble virtues. The Government has too much interest in surrounding itself with tried instruments not to give the preference to those who have, since 1789, devoted themselves to public business, all the time that they could do it with honour, and their want of fortune will no doubt be a further title in their eyes. M. Félix Faulcon did not persist any more in his observations, but a moment later it might be seen that they had not been without effect.

The articles 38 and 39, in determining the qualification for an elector or candidate, had employed the word land-tax; and an explanation was demanded, though it was clear enough. M. Ferrand answered, that the tax paid for the possession of a real estate must be understood, and included under this head in the roll reserved for the land-tax. At first the Commission seemed satisfied with the explanation; and the article was going to pass, when M. de Chabaud-Latour asked if it were not reasonable to add to the land-tax that on persons and personal property; nothing could be so easy to express; it was only necessary to substitute the word direct for that of land. Then I called attention to the point that the change would be of greater importance than it seemed, because by the word direct must be understood every contribution that passed directly from the hand of a citizen taxed into that of the receiver. Now I feared

that among the actually existing taxes might be found some besides those on land, persons, and personal property, some branches of public receipts to which the definition I have just given seemed applicable; I instanced the portion of the tax on beverages paid by the land-owner. M. Garnier refuted me, and showed that the tax on beverages was, like customs dues, and imposts on consumption, most properly placed under indirect contributions, and that the same applied to the duty on records and successions; for all these taxes were only paid accidentally, indirectly, so to speak, as they were not placed on the periodical lists, and renewed at certain fixed times; otherwise, he supported the proposition of adding the tax on persons and personal property to the land-tax for qualification. I answered, that would weaken the bearing of the principle, and that it was prudent to look forward to all the consequences. M. Duhamel replied "that the principle would not be modified to the extent I feared by a long way. The tax on persons and personal property in all France did not amount to more than one-sixth of the land-tax. The largest part of it was paid in large towns, by the owners, and in the country by the heads of manufactures, already put down in the land-tax returns for large sums. What remained, and came into comparison with the rest of the contributions, was not to be easily felt, and would only make a slight addition to the land-tax. So the addition might be adopted without any fear of receiving from anywhere but from the land-tax, the surety so reasonably required of those who should elect or be elected for the Chamber of Deputies. M. Félix Faulcon supported these observations, and the change of the word *land* into *direct* was adopted; but it was strange the idea of the tax on patents never occurred to anyone. Not even the word was pronounced, and I have

reason to think that if it had been brought to the question, if it could have been foreseen that this impost must be considered a direct tax, this last denomination would not have been adopted, and the original term *land* retained. It is not that I was without concern at the change, but the Abbé Montesquiou and the Chancellor kept silence, and by it seemed to place themselves on the side of the dominant opinion in the Commission, and M. Ferrand himself was not unwilling. I was wrong, and I have often since repented, in not strongly insisting on my opinion, and at least demanding that the change should be laid before the King. Certainly it was well worth while, but the foresight of all of us was so short. We were handling inflammable matters at leisure, and we unsuspiciously laid by a reserve of sparks.

The rest of the chapter furnished little matter for discussion. There was some delay on the 44th article, relating to the publicity of the sittings in the Chamber of Deputies. The Constitution framed by the Senate provided that the sittings of the Elective Chamber should be public, except in case it considered it desirable to act in a secret committee. An order couched in these terms would make it indispensable for the Chamber to deliberate in order to form themselves into a secret committee, and experience showed that it was difficult to induce the majority to punish the gallery by sending them away, or to express their distrust publicly. But the remembrance of the excesses that the spectators had been guilty of towards our different Assemblies was still fresh, and the Commission was quite inclined to put a severe check to this abuse. It was desired that the request of three, or even two members, should be sufficient to clear the gallery, and the example of England was quoted, where the claim of one member was at that time sufficient. But

the reply was with justice, that England had a right to debate in committee in both Chambers, whereas in France there was the right of publicity; and that more precautions must be taken when the question was of suspending a law rather than to claim its operation, and the number of deputies required to oblige the Chamber to form a closed committee was settled at five. Explanations were also demanded on the division of the Chamber into sections to discuss the projects of laws presented from the King. The Abbé Montesquiou explained the advantages of this division, as it would require every one of the members of the Chamber to become fully acquainted with the spirit and extent of the law before proceeding to the public discussion, which must be in the hands of a few orators alone. Good had been found to result from this form in the early days of the Constituent Assembly, and perhaps its work would have been less imperfect had this form been preserved. Committees were substituted for it, with its peculiar subject assigned to each; and the result was that each committee exercised an absolute empire over such subject, and the General Assembly strove in vain against it. This system of committees tends so powerfully to centre the authority of the whole Assembly in them, that those of Public Safety and General Security of the Convention had been known to make even that terrible assembly tremble. In order to exclude for ever the danger of a similar distribution, it seemed necessary to reconcile the authority of a constitutional arrangement with that which requires the division of the Chamber into sections to discuss the projects presented to it.

The discussion of article 46 was then taken up, ruling that no amendment could be made to a law, if it had not been proposed or consented to by the King, and sent back and debated in the sections.

M. Ferrand called the attention of the Commission to the fact that this article was the necessary complement, or rather a kind of repetition, of the 16th article of the Constitution, arranging that the King should propose the law. The initiative that the King intends to reserve to himself alone will not be less infringed by alterations made in a proposed law than by the proposal of a new one. Indeed, it would be possible, under colour of amendments, to corrupt the spirit of a law, change its nature, and render it unrecognisable; and the intention of the proposed article is to prevent this in every case. There is one in particular of which the example of a neighbouring country should give us warning; that offered for so long by the English House of Commons, which never failed to add to the vote for the supplies some legislative enactments that they would never have obtained from the House of Lords or the King, if presented alone. For this case as for all others it must be understood that, if the King proposes an amendment to a law already presented by himself, it is a new act of the initiative, that must be referred to and discussed in the sections before the Chamber takes cognisance of it in a general assembly; and that if the amendment originates in the Chamber, it ought to be referred to the King for his consent; that this consent is never anything but an initiative act, which requires fresh discussion in the sections before the decision of the Chamber.

M. Garnier pointed out that all this going and coming would be long and wearisome in many cases; as for instance, when it was only desired to remove some error of drawing, repair an omission, or make some doubtful passages clearer, and that for these purposes some means of establishing quicker communication between the King's Council and the Chamber must be found. I replied to him that it would be too difficult to distinguish the matter

and conditions where an amendment was a grave affair, from those where it ceased to be so, to give rules for them by different legislation, and that the safest course was to confide in a general disposition that would in practice lose its theoretical embarrassments. If amendments tend to make a law perfect, they would become the subject of official communication between the Chamber and the Ministers, and these would not refuse to ask the King to invest them with the initiative. Perhaps the Commission might find it more desirable to trust to this understanding than to confine themselves to arrangements whose future importance should be looked to. The 46th article received general assent. Articles 47, 48, and 49, passed without difficulty, as being the expression of the ancient right of the French to pay no imposts but those to which they have freely consented; and on this head I must remark, that in spite of what has been said of the French character and its inclination to novelty, those that we wished to introduce had much difficulty in taking root, while king, people, and magistrates immediately came to an understanding on the points of our ancient public right and good old maxims. Wherefore it will be an eternal source of regret, that the Constituent Assembly did not build its edifice upon that, instead of delivering us over, tied hand and foot, to experiments upon the human species, such as have as yet produced nothing but crime and ruin.

M. de Semonville proposed an additional article to this chapter, conceived in these terms: "Any petition to either one or the other Chamber, can only be made and presented in writing; the law forbids its being brought in person or to the bar." M. de Semonville said, "I respect the right of petition, but in France it has been frightfully abused, and for a time habitually. There is no need to describe to you those periodical collections of

brigands who, under the pretext of bringing petitions to the Chambers, came to threaten them with their rage, and even carry out their threat before them. We all have been frightened at them. I am wrong: one member of this Commission was not dismayed, when summoned to perform a weak action, by having the bleeding head of one of his colleagues brandished before his eyes. But as great courage is rare, it would not be very safe to confide to it the charge of meeting dangers; it is better to prevent them, and that is the object of the additional article I propose."

M. Boissy d'Anglas, to whose intrepidity M. Semonville had alluded, amid general applause, undertook to reply. He did not dispute the dangers that had at one time attached to the exercise of the right of petition; but were they enough to annul a right held sacred to this time, and without the free exercise of which an essential support to a representative government would be wanting? And yet to what would this right be reduced by the adoption of the article proposed by M. de Semonville? To the dispatch of a written packet; but would this packet be faithfully transmitted and preserved? Would it become the subject of disinterested examination? Would this examination take place at proper time without respect to persons or parties? Abuses can creep in here everywhere, for there is no publicity throughout. However, if the right of petition is of peculiarly great public interest, it is because by its exercise a light may be unexpectedly thrown on abuse of power, on party intrigue, on secret injustice, when the poor man, unhappy, and deserted by all, comes before the face of heaven to beg justice from the powerful on earth. Could such results be obtained by the simple despatch of a sheet of paper so easy to convey away? It is very doubtful. Rather than that the proposed article should be adopted,

it would be much more desirable to search for forms for regulating the presentation of petitions, with respect for public order, and the authority to whom they may be addressed, or rather to confide in the interior police whom the Chambers can create, and where this article would find its natural place.

Some members of the Commission, while allowing for the noble disinterested opinion of M. Boissy d'Anglas, supported the proposition. The Chancellor was going to put it to the vote, when I pointed out that it was an additional article, and that it ought to be previously submitted for approbation, and the Commission passed to the fifth chapter, entitled "Of the Ministers."

Articles 54 and 55 passed without observations; but there were some on Article 56, that provided "that the Ministers could only be indicted for acts of treason or peculation." Something more explicit might have been desired. If by peculation were only to be understood the levy of an impost or a contribution not established by law, the crime would be very rare in future, for there would be too many difficulties in the way; and as for treason, the acceptation to be given to this word is capable of being very much confined, as well as much extended. Thus it would be desirable to settle the idea more precisely as to what should constitute the crime of treason in a Minister.

The Abbé Montesquiou answered that if definitions and details inserted in laws are generally dangerous, it might be much more reasonably said of a constitutional Act that only lays down general principles, and traces out for the Legislature the way in which it should go. That is the essence of the proposal of the Act under discussion, and there is no reason for surprise if the article providing for the accusation of Ministers is conceived in as general terms as the others. However,

it is easy to conceive that the word treason may be applied to all acts in which the interest of the State may knowingly be sacrificed to private or foreign interests; and peculation extend to any sum of money that a Minister should take for himself, authorise, or tolerate the taking of beyond the legal limits. If the article should remain as it is, the Court of Peers would have no difficulty in making the application; but it goes further. It declares that especial laws shall specify the nature of the transgression of treason or peculation, and determine the prosecution. That is what will complete the legislation on this important matter; and it seems as if the article could not be more rationally drawn, as it strictly provides for present need, and promises a more explicit legislation for the future, that could not find all the room required in the table of a constitution. No one contested these truths, and the article was adopted.

On the opening of the next sitting the Chancellor announced that he had laid the article proposed by M. Semonville on the form of the presentation of petitions before the King, and that His Majesty gave his permission for its being the subject of deliberation by the Commission. No one wished to say any more about the article, and it was adopted by a large majority, and the Commission proceeded to the sixth chapter, entitled "Of the Judicial Order."

This chapter passed without difficulty, except the 61st article. It in no way changed the principles of our ancient judicial order or the existing organisation, as the public were satisfied with it. The basis of our judicial order is that the King appoints the judges, that the judges appointed by him are irremovable, and that the only reservation made by the Crown from this immense delegation is the beautiful right of mercy. Nothing can be more simple, nor yet better; and still to reach it a

struggle was needed from St. Louis to Francis the First, and no one knows what might have been the case had not the venality introduced by the latter for ever confirmed the principle of immobility; but with us this principle is of bronze, and Richelieu himself, furious at not being able to destroy the magistrates, had been restricted only to destroying their functions. The distribution of the tribunals was not very different from what it had been before the Revolution. The Constituent Assembly, always afraid of the shadow of the Parliament, had scattered over the soil of France a cloud of tribunals without consistence, and, to bring their absurdity to a point, had constituted them judges of appeal one of another. The Convention, being better advised, had considerably reduced the number of tribunals, and given them a more vigorous organisation with a system that was too lightly abandoned; but being still taken up with the same prejudice as the Constituent Assembly, it continued to make these tribunals reciprocally judges of appeal one from another. Lastly, Napoleon, bolder and more liberal in this point as in so many others, divided the tribunals into two great sections, destined, the one to judge suits in the first instance, and the other on appeal. As to civil matters, this was to establish the ancient judicial order, except the portion of legislative power which the Parliaments had somewhat usurped from the nation, and that of the executive power they had won from the Crown: that is to say, the enrolment and determination of enactments. Somewhat reluctantly, he preserved the institution of juries, which is not, as is very commonly said, an institution of the Constituent Assembly, but a return to the ancient manner in which our fathers closed criminal proceedings; the only difference being that for the simple forms that characterise a people admirable in their simplicity, we have substituted those contrived by metaphysicians for a

corrupted state of society. Lastly, at the summit of the edifice Napoleon had preserved the Court of *Cassation*, as a supreme tribunal, destined to keep the others in the best way of understanding and applying the laws. This excellent institution, without parallel in any European State, is really due to the Constituent Assembly, and what was formerly called in France the Council of Sides was very far from being of equal merit. The King approved the judicial order as he found it established, and wished to preserve it. Without doubt it might have been amended by suppressing some courts of appeal and a good number of tribunals of first hearing; but such arrangements ought to be left to the Legislature. They were then proposed and always without success, because a coalition of local interest was always an obstacle.

So the King had only added one entirely new article to the chapter on judicial punishments—the 66th article abolishing the penalty of confiscation of property, and forbidding its being ever imposed; an admirable determination of the law, and, without contradiction, the fairest gain that the wisdom of modern times has made through the errors of the past. The most horrible governments that have terrified the world lived by confiscations. At Rome, confiscations were made to pay the bids made for empire, or to satisfy the satellites; and at Paris it was also to feed its innumerable assassins that the Committee of Public Safety acknowledged to "coining money on the Place of the Revolution." Honour again to the memory of Louis XVIII.! This Prince did more than abolish confiscation; he maintained its abolition with firmness. On returning from Ghent, when he found himself the master of men who had not only betrayed but outraged him; when cries of vengeance rang in his ears from all sides, and it was ceaselessly repeated to him that during the

Hundred Days the enemies of his dynasty had not been equally generous, the majority of the Chamber of 1815 had expressed all its impatience at this article of the Charter, and when it wasted its time at that day on the means of chiding it, it announced plainly enough how any conformity would have been received. Louis XVIII. remained King and superior to all these views of temporary vengeance—a politician too wise not to applaud whatever may be rightly done, even by others than his own party. M. Benjamin Constant one day mentioned to me the abolition of confiscation as the best stipulation of the Constitution, and I reproached him for not having caused it to be preserved in the Additional Act that he had taken so large a share in. He answered, "I should like to have seen you tried, with all your gentleness and flexibility of mind. As far as the article of confiscation that the Commission had unanimously adopted, the discussion with Napoleon had been maintained pretty freely on both sides, though sometimes with asperity on his; it was his way, but when we came to the article of confiscation, he violently opposed the abolishment. I defended it as best I could, and I thought I had adduced reasons that must embarrass him, when, striking the table sharply with his hand, and looking at me with the eyes you know, he said, 'No, I will not yield; what do you want to bring me to? To change my character? France would not recognize me; is it her old Emperor she wants?' During this address, of which I only give you the opening, his voice was different, his hand was contracting and expanding with convulsive motions, and looked to me like the paw of a lion sharpening his claws. No one agreed with him, but all were silent, and the article was abolished. We were not like you with mild M. Dambray for President, under the flowery auspices of Louis XVIII. If

I had been there, I should perhaps have done no better than you did, but it seems to me that I should have done more. The occasion was admirable, and will not occur again."

I return to the admirable position I have an instant left. Carried away by just admiration for the 66th article, I said that this chapter had undergone little change; the 61st article was the only one that caused an instant's delay. In the project presented by the King's Commissioners, the justices of the peace were, like all other magistrates, declared irremovable. At first no reasons were found for removing them, and if done, it was feared that it would degrade this magistracy, whose merit consists in the confidence that the persons invested with it inspire. M. Clausel de Coussergues brought a different opinion to the Commission. He did not contest the importance of justices of the peace in maintaining good order, tranquillity, and respect for morals in the country; he even pointed out that this magistracy, for the very cause that it was so very much mixed up with the people, must easily influence opinion. "These justices decide alone on almost all the questions submitted to them. These may seem to involve nothing of much interest, but such slight interests as are attached to them frequently involve the means of existence of a poor family. Proved men are required to perform these delicate functions, and time alone gives the means of knowing them well. So let us leave to the King, who is to appoint them, the power of displacing them, if it is evident that they do not perform all the good expected of them. This arrangement, to which real advantages are attached, is besides exempt from all inconvenience; there is no fear of the King's changing a justice of the peace who is respected in his canton, for the appointments committed to him cannot be suspected of caprice,

or the game of party that sometimes corrupts popular elections." The Assembly praised the wisdom of these reflections. I wished to demand that the change should be laid before the King. M. Ferrand made me see that the proposition of M. Clausel de Coussergues tended to increase the royal prerogative, and that it was very hard to find any inconvenience in it. So I let the article be put to the vote, and it was adopted unanimously."

The Commission had held four sittings, and I calculated that it would have three more: the first for the discussion of the chapter entitled private rights granted by the state; and two others to examine some articles I had prepared on the form of elections, and I had prevailed on the King to postpone the royal sitting arranged for the 4th of June to the 8th. I had prepared six articles regulating the form of elections, that ought to have been placed between articles 40 and 41 of the Charter. They had been intended to be in agreement with the 40th article, which only allows those persons to meet and elect deputies who pay a direct tax of twelve pounds, with the election in two degrees, the only form that there was any notion of in France, for it was the only one that had been in use since the most ancient States-General, and the only one that seemed practicable; yet difficulties were encountered, and, in order to clear them up, I had asked for information which I had just received from the Finance Minister.

I was engaged in the comparison, when Baron Bulow, Finance Minister in Prussia, was announced. I knew him personally, for he had worked under my orders as Director of the Treasury at Cassel, when I held the finance ministry there. He told me that he had just been dining with the sovereigns, and that their departure in three

days was positively fixed," I exclaimed, for I knew that it had been arranged that they should not leave Paris before the publication of the Constitution, and protested that we should not be ready for five days. Bulow coolly answered me, "You must finish to-morrow; the Constitution must be proclaimed on the 4th, as the King promised, and we must go on the 5th. The orders are given." "Why, you speak to me there in Napoleonic language; 'must,' 'must,' and 'orders are given.'" "So it is; but do not you think that all the sovereigns together can make a Napoleon? Speaking seriously, make your arrangements on the information I bring you. I can tell you more—the sovereigns have learned from the King of France that the work of the Commission was nearly complete, and as they knew that I saw you pretty often, they told me to make sure of it, and in any case to inform you that delay would be fatal." I accepted the information, and ran to M. Ferrand, in despair, to tell him of our misadventure.

"Well," he coolly replied, "all must be finished to-morrow; you ought to be ready." "Not about the elections; I am not sure of some points that are only projected, and still require verification. Then I shall have to report to you and the Abbé Montesquiou, for you to submit them, if you approve, for the King's approbation, before they can be laid before the Commission. Besides, the chapter entitled Private Rights guaranteed by the State has to be discussed; the whole has to be read over; and lastly, the preamble to the Constitution composed, and you will find that it is perhaps enough for the twenty-four hours that the august sovereigns deign to allow us in their bounteous patience." M. Ferrand replied, "We must not think of adding anything to the chapter of elections. To-morrow, at the commencement of the sitting, we must

inform the Abbé Montesquiou, and we will arrange to finish all."

In reality, next day the King's representatives had a conference with the Chancellor; the Abbé Montesquiou seemed desirous of reaching the end of our labours. He said, "I have also considered this matter of the elections; there are difficulties in it, and there must be no mistakes in it from precipitancy. In fact, the essential articles are arranged; the amount of taxation for the qualification of elector and candidate, the presidency of electoral colleges, the necessity of half of the deputies at least being domiciled in the department. The rest is assuredly not without importance, but it may be confided to the Legislature, and so much the better as, if we attempted to penetrate into the details of the form of elections, we should have found that one article, when determined, at once provoked one or more others, and we should never have done."

So it was arranged to confine ourselves to discussion on the last chapter of the Constitution entitled Private Rights Guaranteed by the State. The members of the Commission were confidentially informed of the necessity of confining their work to that, and of finishing it in that very sitting, and the last chapter was offered for their deliberation. It passed without difficulty. I was far from approving the regulation of article 71, that the old nobility should resume their titles and the new keep theirs, as according to the remainder of the article nobility has no exemption from the general charges and duties, and is nothing but a matter of opinion. So it should have been left to that alone, and no mention made of it in a table of the Constitution. The distinction between the ancient and modern nobility would have been spared, which was to the disadvantage of the latter, who were not long in seeing it and trying to get their revenge. Emperors

and kings can easily begin to make nobles—nothing but time can finish them. If in France the nobility instituted by Napoleon had received the indispensable sanction of time, it would have risen to the same level as the other, while avowing its origin certainly not one without glory, and no regulation of the Charter would have been wanted for that; and that if, as was more likely still, the ancient and modern nobility were to be both carried away by the torrent which lays waste society under our eyes, it was still more useless to mention it. But the article was found in the Constitution of the Senate; it must be looked on as the wish of the new nobility; and Louis XVIII., who never lost his malice even in the midst of the gravest matters, might have been amused at granting to the great lords of Bonaparte, at their own request, a constitutional patent marking them as upstarts.

Having finished the last chapter of the Constitution, temporary articles were taken in hand, having as their sole object the preservation of the Legislative Body then existing, and its renewal by fifths. These articles could not find any difficulty. The work of the Commission ended there.

The Chancellor thanked us in the King's name for the zeal we had applied to such an important matter, and for our efforts to make amends by ardour and assiduity for the over-short space of time that had been allowed them; and he added that he should esteem himself happy if on any occasion he should be the means of conveying to the members of the Commission the sense of high esteem in which His Majesty held them, and the manner in which he would be pleased to recompense their services. The Commission was dissolved.

It was arranged by the King's commissaries that

I should employ the remaining time in reviewing the whole work, and putting it into its final form; that I should prepare .a preamble to place before it, and make four copies, one to be signed by the King and invested with the forms of Chancery, and the other three delivered to the Chancellor, Montesquiou, and Ferrand.

CHAPTER IX.

Name to be given to the Act—Publication of the Charter—Marquis de Brézé—Preamble of the Charter—M. de Fontanes—Untimely Visit of the Director of Police—Safety of the Allied Sovereigns—Dangerous Operation—Date of the Charter—Councils of the Ministry—The King's Punctuality—Magnificent Spectacle—Interview with the King's Brother—Visits to the Ministers.

A DIFFICULTY had arisen some days previously in the presence of the King on the name to be given to the Act that the Commission was employed on, and the form in which it should be published. The Chancellor was of opinion it should be called the Ordinance of Reformation, and to send it to be enrolled in the courts and administrative bodies. M. Ferrand wished it to be called the Act of the Constitution; and without declining its enrolment by the courts and administrative bodies, he considered that it should also be sent for acceptance to the Assemblies in the Cantons. I opposed both plans. At first I maintained that the Act in question could not be called by the name of Ordinance of Reformation, nor of that of Act of the Constitution. It had been very positively explained, and well understood in the Commission, that this Act was derived from the royal authority pre-existing in all its integrity, and that it only contained the concessions that this authority had considered suitable to make *de proprio motu*, and in full and entire liberty. So it could not be called the Act of the Constitution, because in general, and especially in France,

after the opinions that have prevailed for five-and-twenty years, the word Constitution supposes a conference to establish a new order of things between the King and the representatives of the people, alone if they are really acting alone, or of the people and the great persons as a neighbouring nation has given examples. It is very evident that nothing of the sort is to be found here. The title of Ordinance of Reformation is no more applicable, for this expression is only employed in our ancient jurisprudence to the laws that were really meant to reform some abuses that had glided into the State, and not the introduction of a new institution. If there was an absolute desire to make use of an old word, that of edict would be preferable; and still there would be no means of detaching the idea of an edict from that of Parliaments to register it or make remonstrances. As the question is about a concession freely made by a king to his subjects, the name anciently used, consecrated by the history of several nations and our own, is that of charter. If desired, it may be called Charter of Rights; the Great Charter, as in England, or indeed the Constitutional Charter. So far I united the votes, except that of the Chancellor, who seemed to hold to the title of Ordinance of Reformation.

I went on, "Now, what does the King do with a Charter? He can easily order the enrolment of it when he pleases, and in such form as he chooses, but that is only a secondary form. The first and most essential is that he should publicly make a grant and concession of this Charter to his subjects, and solemnly swear to execute it on his side. It would be desirable if this gift could be granted to the whole of France, united in primary assemblies, because the act would then receive a character of greater authenticity, and the gratitude and affection that it should excite penetrate more deeply into the heart of the French;

but there must be delays and formalities for the convocation of the primary assemblies, and the speedy publication of the Charter is required by the actual state of the kingdom. However, as it cannot be addressed to all France assembled, search must be made whether there be not representatives who may, to a certain point, stand for her. These representatives seem to present themselves in the Senate and Legislative Body. The first of these two powers has already taken, in an analogous case, an initiative against which no objection has been raised; the second seems still better selected by the very nature of its functions to covenant for the people. Thus it is to these two bodies that the King should make the public declaration of the grant of the Charter, and before them that he ought to take the oath to execute it, while waiting for the ceremony of his consecration, when he can swear to maintain it equally, or, indeed, before our other fundamental laws."

This second portion of my opinion encountered difficulties. All were well agreed on the publication of the Charter, in the presence of the Senate and Legislative Body; but these two bodies were thought hardly substantial enough to receive the royal oath, which is only given once in France, at the Coronation. The one in reality was just about to disappear, the other dated from a period only avowed out of dire necessity; and therefore they insisted on sending the Charter for the acceptance of the cantonal assemblies. M. Ferrand was so persistent on this point that the King would not decide, and asked me for a report, which I sent him that very evening. There was another difficulty in the way: from what time should the reign be taken to commence? The difficulty had been avoided in the Declaration of Saint Ouen, as it was simply dated from the 2nd of May, 1814; but there was no means of retreat—the Charter must have a

royal date, and what? As soon as the former royalty was recognised, one of its fundamental principles must necessarily be admitted, that is to say, descent from male to male without possible interruption. Death seizes the living. "The King is dead! Long live the King!" It seemed as if our fathers thought they could not employ too sharply defined an expression to express the promptitude of this transmission. Our history furnished two examples similar to the existing condition. Henry IV. had dated his reign from the day of the death of Henry III., though his recognition, worked out at length from party rage, was still questionable by law. Charles VII. had done the same from the death of his father, in spite of the treaty of Troyes and the assent given by the great bodies of the state, the capital, and of the majority of the provinces. And it was really a powerful conservative principle to allow that as long as there remained a prince in the line of succession there was a King in France or for France. Any further homage to this principle was so much gain to the future safety of the country. Otherwise there was a relapse to the principle of sovereignty of the people; there was no medium. If Louis XVIII. dated his acts from the day he was recalled to the throne, he sanctioned this recall, and recognised an authority as having the right to recall him. Now what is this authority if not that of the people? But if the King recognised such an important act, he must recognise all others emanating from the same power. Thence would come the legality of the Convention and all its acts; that of the Empire and all its institutions; and there would be no end to the consequences. It is better to adhere to the old principle. The King had reigned ever since his right to the throne was opened. Now let him be considered to have been always present, and to have ratified what was done in

his absence, by this very fiction even he will impress an entirely monarchical sanction on acts emanating from different authorities. Thus the past was restored to the domain of order, and legislation resumes its ancient origin and uniformity.

At the closing sitting of the Commission, I had proposed to my two colleagues to go to the King and beseech him to resolve these questions that could not be deferred another day. The Abbé Montesquiou, who took refuge in his haughty ill-humour whenever he had to enter the lists with me, said there would be time to *speak* to the King about it next morning, as if there had been nothing in question but a matter of conversation; and I went home charged with all that remained to be done to have the Charter ready for publication next day. I found my old schoolfellow, the Marquis de Brézé, to whom this solemnity was a greater care than to myself. He had searched the archives of the French ceremonials in vain; he had found nothing there that either nearly or remotely treated of the publication of a Charter; and yet he would take nothing on himself—heaven forbid—and he came to me as a friend to assist him to escape from this cruel embarrassment. I excused myself from giving any advice, protesting my complete ignorance of the matter. I showed him how I was pressed for time, and that I had work enough left to drown me. He insisted and maintained that he was in the same condition as myself, and that I must hear him. He entered into the business and threatened to be lengthy. I was forced to interrupt him, and repeat that the subject of ceremonies was little understood, and could only be commented on at the Court, because the circle of its importance, whatever it might be, did not extend beyond the place where the King was dwelling; that it would be betrayal of confidence to let it go further; and I rose, telling him, with

all humility, that His Majesty's service forbade my conversing with him any longer. It was easy for me to see that the confidence of the school friend had been speedily replaced by the offended pride of the Grand Master, and M. de Brézé quitted me with unequivocal signs of displeasure, which he long retained; but he went away, and that was all I wanted of him.

I had distrusted my own powers for the preamble of the Charter, and had addressed myself for its composition to the man in all France I thought most suited for it, from his charming talent, M. de Fontanes. He had promised to send me his manuscript in the course of the evening, and I remained in perfect security on this point, well persuaded that I should find matter for admiration and none for criticism. I was still engaged about ten in the evening with M. Masson, one of my chiefs of division on the last revision of the whole of the Charter, when I received the work of M. de Fontanes. I seized it with avidity, and perceived with pain that the work, very distinguished of its kind, and worthy of its author, was not fit for the place it was intended for. M. de Fontanes had seldom had occasion to read the preambles of laws, for orators did not usually go there for their models of style. The piece he had sent me contained lofty thoughts on the matter, clothed in forms of eloquence; but these thoughts were too general, these forms too brilliant. It was a fine composition, but not a preamble. I showed it to M. Masson, and he thought as I did; and yet what could be done? It was now past ten o'clock, it had to be ready for the next day, and the work that had thus unexpectedly failed, would require no less than two days' meditation and quiet, and in this very moment a thousand other cares assailed me. I was for a moment in despair. M. Masson said, "Why is the embarrassment so great? You think that the sheets of M. Fon-

tanes will be of no use to you, apparently, because you think that they do not fulfil the conditions you require in the preamble of laws? Well, what are these conditions? Dictate to me at once what you think the piece should contain. Recover yourself, and think of the order of ideas." I did, indeed, dictate with a kind of concentrated rage, but went through to the end. "Now," said my partner, "let us see if, in this first sketch, the order of ideas is exactly followed, for success depends chiefly on that."

We corrected and transposed till we were both satisfied. "Very good," said he. "We will have this tracing copied out at once, and your preamble is made. You will only have to fill it out, and you have no want of words. Take courage; here we are some way advanced." He came back in a quarter of an hour and gave me the fair copy of the first draught. I began to dictate, and got on more easily than I could have expected. My difficulty was brevity. I came to the end. I corrected once to get the thoughts right, again for the words, and in less than two hours the piece was composed just as it was printed. I wished to keep the manuscript to correct it again.

"Not the least," said M. Masson. "Allow me to carry it away; I know you. You would spend the rest of the night in recasting it in a dozen different ways, and to-morrow it would not be so good. Think no more of the Charter or its preamble. Go to bed and sleep, if you can."

I really did throw myself on my bed to rest, but with little hope of sleep. I was scarcely in it when they came to tell me that an inspector of police wished to speak to me on an urgent matter. He appeared, and communicated to me two reports that had come from two different quarters, that there was a quantity of powder on the

river bank, at the bottom of the Quay d'Orsay; and one of these reports added that it was with the design of blowing up the Sovereigns next day, when they were to pass this place on the quay on their way to the palace of the Legislative Body for the publication of the Charter. The inspector added, that he had obtained as much information as the lateness of the hour at which he had received the reports allowed, and the result so far was that the place was where the Russian army loaded their powder-waggons; that the work of carting had occupied all the day before, and would occupy that day. As to the plan of blowing up the Sovereigns as they pass, he was much inclined to believe that it was one of those explanations to which we were used, of a simple matter by a crime; but he felt it his duty to inform me, in consequence of orders he had received, to neglect nothing that seemed to have the least bearing in the world on the security of the Sovereigns, who were at Paris. In reality, the Russian generals had begged me to be on my guard, and to protect the Emperor Alexander to the best of my ability; because, if such a misfortune should come to pass as that he should not be assassinated, but even insulted in any way at Paris, himself and his generals would not be powerful enough to prevent the soldiers, who adored him, from setting fire to the city; so that if, as composer of the Charter, I was annoyed at his hasty departure, I was infinitely comforted as Director-General of Police. I answered to the inspector that it was necessary to take as much pains to verify the plot for blowing up the Sovereigns as if we both believed it, and besides, to persuade the Russian officers, in charge of the carting of the powder, to suspend their operations from ten in the morning till two in the afternoon. I dismissed him, asking for another report at eight o'clock, for at nine I had to go to the King.

The inspector returned at eight o'clock. I had just received a note from the King, containing a very Corsican report on the powder-plot, that no doubt had reached him from the police at the Tuileries. The King, though he did not believe it, yet ordered me to ascertain what could have caused such a report, and informed me that he would receive me at ten o'clock, to receive the work confided to me.

The inspector told me that he had not yet discovered, and probably should not discover, any traces of a plot, but that the attempts he had made to induce the Russian officers to suspend the carting of their powder were useless; and yet it was impossible to conceal from oneself that there was danger to the neighbourhood in this work, and it ought to be stopped at any cost. I instantly went to General Sacken, who in his government of Paris had shown himself kind and attentive to the inhabitants. I had to wait, for it was not yet day with his Excellency; and when I was able to explain to him the object of my visit, and its pressing necessity, he was full of regrets that the order of suspension that I asked for was not in his power. I did all I could to represent to him that the Governor of Paris for the Emperor of Russia was competent to order that His Majesty should not be blown up with a barrel of powder within Paris. In vain did I heighten the picture to frighten him; I only obtained from him some lines of introduction for the General Commandant of the Russian artillery, who lived in the Faubourg St. Germain.

I had to hurry back from the Rue Grange Batelière to the Place du Palais Bourbon, and wait again till day broke for this new power. My minutes were numbered, and I was burning with impatience. At last my friend appeared. He spoke French very badly, and his manners were very stiff. I wrote down some remarks, as well as I could, on

the note of General Sacken. He contented himself with walking hastily up and down the room, as if I had not spoken, and, as far as he was concerned, it was much the same thing. However, in his turn he gave me a note for a colonel, who happily lodged close to the house belonging to the police. I left him quite vexed, and was sorry I had not gone to the Emperor himself. I was thinking whether I should not go to the Elysée palace, and was stopped by the fact that the officer to whom I was sent was close by. I went to him. Providence had reserved him for my consolation. He received me with remarkable politeness, expressed sorrow for the trouble I had taken, and assured me that he would instantly go and stop the moving of the powder going on at the port. He added that nothing should be left but the guards required for the strict execution of his orders, and that he would himself remain there all the time, from the Sovereigns passing till their return.

I left this colonel charmed with him. I very speedily fetched my portfolio from the police mansion, and reached the King just after ten. I gave as my excuse the journeys I had been obliged to make, to be able to set the mind of the King perfectly at rest on the report he had sent me in the morning. His Majesty asked me if I had been to the very place to make sure whether the colonel was keeping his promise. I could not answer in the affirmative, and received orders to go and see. On returning to the King's cabinet, and having this time given unequivocal assurances, I opened my portfolio. I presented to the King three copies of the Charter. I held a fourth in my hand, and I asked his Majesty if he would allow me to begin reading. The Ministers were present. The King looked to the clock, and said—

"We have not too much time."

"May I be allowed to observe to the King that the

preamble of the Charter is new, and should be submitted for his approbation?"

"Yes, but we can trust you, and I know that you have taken your degree on this point."

I bowed in token of gratitude, and contented myself with asking whether the King had decided from what year of his reign the Charter should be dated, and to whom it should be addressed after publication in the form that was going to be followed. The King replied that there would be time to arrange that later, and that now he must go on to the Assembly. The golden band soon invaded the cabinet, and business humbly made way for the rout of ceremonies.

Perhaps on that day I rather regretted the punctuality of Louis XVIII. In reality, exactness was one of the most precious qualities of the King. If he required it from those who had the honour of approaching him, he set the example himself.

I remember that, soon after the King's return, the Councils of the Ministers were very frequent. Before entering the large chamber where the King held Council, the Ministers' habit was to assemble in the throne-room, and there converse till the moment the clock showed that the King would be there immediately. One day we had forgotten ourselves listening to Chancellor Dambray. The King had time to get into the large chamber and sit down. We only saw how absorbed we were, when the Chamberlain came out to close the folding-doors, and keep the outer guard. We all hastened in, and the King smiled at our embarrassment. The Chancellor, who was rather to blame for our inattention, made some excuses in the name of the Ministers, and concluded with a eulogium on the King's punctuality.

"Gentlemen," replied His Majesty, turning on us one

of those caressing glances he had the secret of, "punctuality is the politeness of kings."

It may be remembered that, of the three questions that remained undecided, one only had been resolved, that is to say, that the Constitutional Act should bear the name of Charter. So the King and the Chancellor had made use of this expression in their discourse. I thought that the question of its publication had been left undetermined between the opinion of the Chancellor, who wished the Charter to be addressed to the tribunals, and that of M. Ferrand, who voted it should be sent to the Cantonal Assemblies, and, lastly, my own, claiming that it should be sent to the Primary Assemblies. I only learned from the Chancellor's speech that he had gained his cause, and afterwards, that he had pleaded it alone before the King. Nothing was more to be regretted than the mania that the Ministers in favour at that time had for doing business alone with the King, when, from its nature, it required debates and deliberation. Royal authority had hardly arisen, before it was trifled with at anyone's fancy. This abuse was especially to be felt in drawing up the Charter. Grave difficulties had been found in it, and not one caused, I will not say a debate in Council, but even a meeting of the three representatives and the Chancellor. No record was kept of these conferences or resolutions. It was the Chancellor, or more often the Abbé Montesquiou, who went to tell the King what had passed at the Commission, and they did it as mere form of conversational news. Then they reported the King's decisions by word of mouth. I objected; I told the Chancellor that had not been the way under Louis XIV., in the case of the Conferences for the Ordinances, during which registers had been kept of everything, even almost to a word, and all was by rule, even to the place that each Com-

missioner occupied around the table. The Chancellor always answered me that we were too much pressed for time, and what was of most consequence was to finish quickly.

The place of assembly had been appointed at the Palace of the Legislative Body. The assembly was numerous and splendid. Europe was represented by the Sovereigns and great personages that followed in their train. A magnificent throne had been set up for the King on the platform where the president generally sits. The great Officers of the Crown filled the steps. The benches of the hall were occupied, to the right, by the Members of the Senate, to the left, by those of the Chamber of Deputies. The Ministers sat in the centre in places reserved for them. The Royal Family and foreign Sovereigns were placed on richly decorated tribunes. The remainder of the vast amphitheatre was filled with the most elegant and distinguished people of the city; and it may be remembered that Paris was at this moment, in the fullest sense of the expression, the meeting-place of Europe. Never, at any time of its pomp, not even during the reign of Napoleon, had this celebrated capital offered anything comparable to the august and magnificent spectacle of all these Sovereigns, without arms, friends, and having just frankly united their voices to that of the King of France for the happiness and liberty of that nation, their fear of which had only ceased that admiration might begin again. How many ideas did such a spectacle raise! Would the French long preserve the memory of it? What destiny was in store for this law that was going to be promulgated with solemnity by all Europe. Would those who to-day received it with enthusiasm be able to guard it with wisdom and defend it intrepidly? Has the real secret been recovered of that exchange, some time sus-

pended, of affection and gratitude, protection and love, that for twelve centuries joined together the French and their Kings.

The Nestor of the Kings present, Louis XVIII., performed his part with remarkable dignity. He delivered, in a loud tone, a discourse, well imagined, well written, and especially appropriate to a somewhat difficult circumstance, for it was incumbent on him to speak of the necessary sacrifices and relinquished conquests. This dangerous subject was delicately touched. The discourse also gained in merit from the manner in which it was delivered; an excellent voice, just and measured action, an attitude full of dignity. Besides, we recognised the French accent, and even the accent of the King of France. Success was universal and real, it was deserved.

The Chancellor, as was usual, spoke to develop what the King's speech had only indicated. It was thought that he somewhat diverged from the spirit in which the King's discourse had been conceived. He attempted to show that royalty had neither lost any, nor could lose any, of the absolute authority it exercised in France, and was obstinate in calling the Charter an ordinance of reformation. The discourse of this virtuous man was the frank expression of his principles: he would not have advised the King to grant the Charter; but when it was once given, he held his conscience bound to be faithful to it. And this magistrate of the olden time did not allow of compromises. He was not yet sufficiently known to have justice done him, and this was not a happy commencement for him.

M. Ferrand, as senior of the King's representatives, read the Charter. His voice, naturally dull, was weakened by illness, and, as author of the preamble, I suffered more than I can tell by his manner of reading it. However, it

seemed to me that the Charter was generally well received. I saw marks of individual approbation on all the benches, and it had become general when the reading was finished.

The members of the old Senate and the deputies of departments rose and took the oath of fidelity to the King, and obedience to the Constitutional Charter and laws of the realm. All the acts of this memorable sitting having been performed, the King retired, surrounded by the same company as when he entered. The Ministers followed him to his cabinet, and everyone fell into ecstasies over his discourse, and the tone he had delivered it in. This time the flattery, and even a little ecstasy, was pardonable. Louis XVIII. was enchanted. This prince, singularly desirous of successes of talent and grace, especially delighted to obtain them in remarkable circumstances. Every year the opening of the Chambers was a holiday for him, and he came back delighted with the applause he had received.

CHAPTER X.

The Court at Ghent—Interview with Monsieur—M. de Talleyrand's Delay—The Duke of Orleans—Events in France—Advance of the Foreign Troops—General Beurnonville—His remarkable History—Dismissal of M. de Talleyrand—Departure of the King from Ghent—M. Duval—Unexpected Incident—Recall of M. de Talleyrand—Cambrai—Reception of Ministers by the King—Meeting of His Majesty's Council—Celebration of the King's Entrance into his Dominions—Royal Indifference.

* * * On leaving the King, I went to pay my respects to his brother.* That prince received me in the amiable way he could not help, even if he wished to do so. The visit was not limited to the respectful forms of etiquette. Monsieur's conversation with me was long and animated. He reviewed all the events that had taken place since the day of his arrival in France. This recollection affected both of us.

"Well! my dear Beugnot," continued his highness, "here we are once more left outside; and whose fault is it? Must the blame this time be laid to my principles, that they would not admit, or on my friends, whom they have taken so much pains to remove? Come, be honest, and explain yourself."

I admitted to Monsieur all that was true in this observation, but I begged him also to make allowance, in the misfortune that had just come upon us, for acts of imprudence not always justified by the best intentions;

* In the month of December, 1814, Count Beugnot had been appointed Minister of Marine: in that capacity he followed King Louis XVIII. to Ghent during the Hundred Days.

such as too marked a separation between the men and things of the Revolution and those of the *ancien régime*, and the apparent favour shown to this last party.

I complained that they seemed to have intentionally ruffled self-complacency, wounded susceptibilities, and sometimes raised alarm for interests.

Monsieur replied, "If I grant you all that—and I think there is much abatement to be made from it—you had made your system prevail; you had the disposal of all the powers of Government, and you could not defend us. You must allow that a different system could not have done worse, and it is not proved that it would not have done better."

Those who have not transacted business with the Count d'Artois accuse him on every occasion of not applying any capacity to them, of his narrow views and obstinacy. None of these reproaches are strictly true. He is intelligent in matters of business, to which he devotes himself with great application. It must always be remembered that he holds to the principles he was brought up in; but his attachment is founded on conviction rather than on prejudice, as may be seen by the way in which he defends himself. No more is he without dexterity in reasoning, and however little advantage you give him he seizes it that moment. All this is, besides, combined with perfect honesty, and no man's conscience is more pure than his.

The result of our first conference was that all shades of royalists must be cast into one party, that of honest men; and all who were religious, honest, devoted to France and the King, should be admitted, without distinction, to labour for the re-establishment of France, after its misfortunes, and to remove everything that had induced them.

After this first interview with the Count d'Artois, I

visited without delay the principal personages who had followed the King; and in the evening I took possession of some chambers assigned to me in the house where M. Louis already lived. My neighbour did not fail to question me sharply on the employment of my day.

"Well, you have seen the King, you have seen his brother, you have seen Blacas; what are they about? Are they forming a Ministry? Have they got their man for Finance? I am sure they are looking everywhere for him."

"Indeed, I do not at all know, for I neither did nor could say anything having reference to any such matter. It seems to me that there is a preliminary to the formation of any Ministry; namely, the return of the King to France. I touched generally on this point with the King and his brother. I tried to do it with the moderation their position demands, and I swear to you that not a word was said about Government matters."

"You will tell nothing,—very good; I am sure that Blacas is in search of a Finance Minister. Some time before we went away he caused proposals to be made to Mollien. We should have done as well to stay where we were as to come to Ghent. These people are beginning to say stupid things, till they have a chance of doing them. It is that booby —— that they mean to have. I have nothing to do but to speak for myself; as for you, I quite expect that you will do the same as at Paris—cajole them, and always be of their opinion."

"You have seen more than one specimen to the contrary. But that will do; when anyone has to live with you, he must sometimes put up with bad compliments."

It was to no purpose; from the first day of my arrival at Ghent, M. Louis supposed I was one of those who were looking for a successor to him as Finance Minister,

and this unfounded prejudice determined his conduct to me.

Next day I visited the Ministers. I found M. Dambray in a state of embarrassment not natural to him. He asked me, with some anxiety, if the King or his brother had said anything to me about him; he told me he lived in retirement, taking no part in any sort of business, because, in our position here, there was very little for a Chancellor to do. I thought that some coolness had been displayed by the King, and, as M. Dambray was really attached to His Majesty, it was not surprising that he was so deeply affected by it as not to be able entirely to conceal his feelings. Some days later I learnt whence the cloud had arisen.

The Chancellor had intimated to the Ministers the King's order to go to Lille, but he himself had not acted in accordance with it; but, when he left Paris, had gone to his estate at Montigny, in Normandy. He hoped to remain there in peace, as he had done for five-and-twenty years, when the Emperor was informed of his stay by the sub-prefect of the division of Dieppe, Felix Lepelletier. Fouché, the Minister of Police, persuaded the Emperor to pay no attention to M. Dambray, describing him as an inoffensive man. The Emperor at first assented; but looking over the *rapport de denonciation*, he read in it that the Chancellor was worth eight thousand pounds a year, and that he would not fail to hold it at the disposal of the Bourbons. "Oh!" said the Emperor, "I have been too quick! Eight thousand a year; it is a fortune for four generals. We must make that man go away."

These denunciations and changes of purpose had taken up a fortnight, during which M. Dambray had not appeared before Louis XVIII., who held strictly to the principle that the King and Chancellor of France were

inseparable, like body and soul. Neither had appeared the old Chancellor, M. de Barentin, in whom, however well disposed to him, it was impossible to find any other merit than that of his past fidelity, and having a daughter married to M. Dambray. The father-in-law had done better. He had offered to take the oaths to the Emperor, only asking the restitution of some woods which, from want of time, he had been unable to obtain from Louis XVIII. Napoleon, to whom that seemed rather amusing, accepted the oath, gave the woods, and received the visit of M. Barentin. The King, who on his side never missed a joke, on his restoration revenged himself by a bon-mot expressly made for this person. Good M. Barentin was giving to the King the best explanation he could, and so bad enough, of his visit to Bonaparte, and the restoration of his woods, and, alluding as slightly as possible to his oath, said,* "I did not exactly swear." "I understand," answered the King. "You stumbled at it. At your age men only do things by halves."

No doubt some hints respecting these peculiarities had reached Ghent, as I heard of them there, and the King at first turned the cold shoulder on M. Dambray. The ordeal still continued when I arrived, and by it I explain the kind of dejection in which I found the Chancellor. At a later period, the people who wished to exclude him from the Ministry exaggerated this little incident very much. It is true that in all that pertained to fidelity they were themselves acknowledged masters.

My second visit was to the Duke de Feltre.† I found him lodged in a very nice house, and occupying a room that even in Paris would not have been beneath his fortune. He was seated at a great bureau, with several

* "Je n'ai précisément juré," disait-il. "J'entends: vous avez jurotté," &c.
† Clarke.

bundles of papers lying on it arranged very methodically, I might almost say elegantly. I listened to him while he told me his cares, his labours, and the position which he occupied apart from the other servants of the King. He told me that till this time he had united the functions of Minister of Marine and of War; but he engaged to me that very day to take the King's orders to send me all matters relating to the former department. He begged me to observe with what art he had divided the naval and military business; and I must confess the Duke de Feltre must have had the bump of nomenclature extremely developed.

The same day I saw General Beurnonville. As for him, I expected what he was going to say; for he had brought with him from Paris a theme composed long ago, on which his fertility was inexhaustible. On leaving the Provisional Government, General Beurnonville had entered the Council in quality of Minister of State, and then he found himself in some sort judge of the departmental Ministers. He could not understand how it was that a Minister with a portfolio, as he called it, should have a salary exceeding four thousand a year, while nowhere was there any question as to the salaries of Ministers of State. If the salaries were to correspond with the importance of the functions, they ought to be greater. More than once he had communicated to me his impatience on this point, and pressed me to speak of it in Council. And so I did. It had been considered just to grant the Ministers of State an indemnification for the additional display that their entry into the Council necessitated; but the matter had been remitted, as was right, to the budget of 1816, which Napoleon had not left us time to prepare. The general thought it quite natural that the portfolio Ministers should have followed the King. He said, "They were paid well enough for

that; and besides, these gentlemen had provided themselves with a viaticum before they started; but for the Ministers of State, their coming to Ghent was a simple sacrifice, for which they could not be sufficiently grateful to them, and yet the distinctions and rewards would still fall to the lot of these portfolio gentlemen."

I could form my own judgment as to the sacrifice which General Beurnonville had made in coming to Ghent; but I contented myself with defending the portfolio Ministers with respect to the *viaticum* and the rewards, and I applauded the generous sentiments that had brought the Ministers of State to Ghent.

Among the politicians who had followed the King to Ghent might be remarked MM. de Vaublanc, Capelle, Anglès, Mounier, and Guizot. The love of these gentlemen for the Bourbons was in proportion to the hatred which they bore to Napoleon, and also to the fear with which he inspired them. M. de Vaublanc, whose devotion was greater than his ability, had done some imprudent things when the news of the Emperor's disembarkation arrived at Metz, where he was prefect. The general commanding the division, with whom he was not on good terms, had in some measure forced him to depart. The frontier was near. M. de Vaublanc passed it, and once out of France he thought that the best thing he could do was to join the King at Ghent.

M. Capelle had been, in 1814, ordered for trial by the Emperor for having abandoned the town of Geneva, where he, too, was prefect, when forty thousand Austrians were at the doors and on the point of entering. He was afraid that the Emperor might take a fancy to have him shot, and thought it prudent to deprive him of the opportunity by taking refuge with the King.

M. Anglès had held the Ministry of Police under the Provisional Government. His name figured in the Lyons

decree, so there was no trouble in finding out why he was at Ghent.

M. Guizot was not by any means sure that the Bonapartists, when they returned to power, would not take vengeance on him for the somewhat harsh manner he had treated them when he filled the place of secretary to the Abbé Montesquiou.

As for M. Mounier, who did not love the Emperor a bit better for having been of his cabinet, and who delighted in making parodies of the great imperial domestic scenes, he had no wish to try how Bonaparte, on his return, might like his wit.

Besides, with the exception of M. Vaublanc, who was of mature agé, the others were young, and consequently generous. The most worthy side had attractions in their eyes. If they succeeded, fortune would come to them from an honourable quarter; if unsuccessful, life was before them to repair a first check, which would still not be inglorious. I am convinced the determination of Mounier and Guizot was much influenced by such feelings as these.

The Ministers and persons I have mentioned composed what I call the party of men of business, or the Government. In that of the Court were to be found the first gentlemen of the chamber, the captains of the guards, and a very small number of officers of the household, who had followed the King. In spite of circumstances, and of their common lot, these two parties lived apart. The individuals met in presence of the King, at the play, or when out walking, and treated each other with courteous politeness; but they never met at dinner, cards, or even for conversation. The manners of the first emigration had re-appeared in all their simplicity. The year we had just passed in France might have been compared to a masquerade, on leaving which everyone throws off his

mask and resumes his usual dress. Some men were not the least in the world mortified at this, but they grieved because they here beheld in existence the cause of the evils we experienced, and of those which yet awaited us.

I lived, as I have said, in the same house as M. Louis. We decided to put our establishments into one. Would anyone like to know the state kept at Ghent by the united Ministers of the most Christian King? One servant shared between us made our beds, swept our rooms, brushed our clothes, and cleaned our boots. We dined at a *table d'hôte,* at half-a-crown a head. Our breakfast was a bowl of milk, and our supper a glass of *eau sucrée.* This diet had the double merit of being very wholesome and very cheap, and I had taken to it without difficulty after the luxurious table I had been used to for twenty years. It was M. Louis who had established this strict order. It was his opinion that some day we should return to France under some rule or other. Was this day distant, or was it near? No one could say. Meanwhile it was necessary to put such restraint upon our appetites that we should be able to command them, and never fall into any sort of dependence on person or thing. I demonstrated to him that by only spending the fourth part of the income we had abroad, we could live in a more liberal and becoming manner. He answered me that our needs would increase with age, while our resources might be diminished by unforeseen events, and that if we saved anything, it was better to send money to our families than to ask them for it. That time he was right. Besides, very strict economy was the general law of the emigrants at Ghent; no one had a carriage; we were very simply clad, and at table we vied with each other in sobriety. The old emigrants remembered how dearly they had paid for the luxuries

of Coblentz and the magnificence of the army of the princes; they did not want to be so caught a second time, and the new ones imitated them the more willingly, as simple manners were natural to them. The Duke de Feltre alone was an exception; he always went out in an elegant carriage with two footmen. He gave a dinner every week. His display was inferior only to that of the King, or rather there was no display at Ghent but that of the King's and the Duke de Feltre. The latter acted frankly and openly, without perceiving in the least the contrast between him and his colleagues, and convinced, as he was, that a house, a carriage, servants, a porter, and a cook are five senses attached to the body of every Minister.

Our ordinary life was not dull, at least for M. Louis and myself; and I cannot remember that I ever experienced a moment's *ennui* at Ghent. We employed the morning in settling the few matters of business that came to us, or were sent to us by the King. The dinner, at half-a-crown a head, was always enlivened by good conversations or by gaiety; what they had to eat was the smallest concern to the majority of the guests. This majority was composed of men distinguished for the variety of their talents, the contact of which made a shower of sparks fly from one end of the table to the other. M. Mounier brought there the captivating animation and sallies of wit that in him overlie a fund of serious knowledge and a vigorous mind. M. Guizot, neither so animated nor so incisive, but born for discussion, and always extending its scope as much by the power of his ideas as the variety of his knowledge, maintained his position well. The others paid their share, which also possessed its value. The essential point was not the dinner; that was very soon over. General Beurnonville was allowed to make a little

speech, complaining of the badness of the dinner; that was our little "order of the day;" and after that conversation began, and generally night found us still together round the table.

It was then the most beautiful season of the year; the weather was charming. We sometimes allowed ourselves country parties, of which M. Capelle took the chief direction. The programme consisted of an enormous dish of fish, called in the style of Rapée a *matelote*, and a dish of potatoes, all done *à l'Anglaise*, and washed down with good Louvain beer. These country dinners were not more expensive than those in town, and were still pleasanter. Politics were then put aside, and nothing but subjects connected with light literature or the fine arts were discussed. The journey and return over plains covered with verdure and with hope were also most agreeable, and these little changes had the merit of breaking up the uniformity of our lives.

Sometimes we spent an evening at the play, where it was said the arrival of the Court of France had collected the most distinguished actors. They were detestable, and among us had no constant auditor except the famous Father Elysée, who, to the honour of his taste, or whatever other motive may have induced him, spent much more of his time behind the scenes than in the pit.

We were generally received by the King in a rotunda that formed part of his hotel, but could be entered from outside without passing through the apartments inhabited by His Majesty. There the members of the Diplomatic Body and the Ministers assembled. The journals were read there, and the ambassadors confidentially gave us such news of their courts as they chose to give to the public. With the same discretion we communicated to them the secret information which reached us from

Paris, and they composed their despatches for the next day from it. Yet, with all this manœuvring, some truths came out. We saw that the courts remained unanimous in their decision of never coming to a composition with Napoleon, and thence we came to the conclusion that the struggle would only be a matter of longer or shorter duration, but that Napoleon must give in at last. And yet it seemed as if the love of country was revived on foreign soil, in consequence of being parted from its object. We lamented the evils that such a struggle would entail on France, and we were obliged to recognise with some sorrow that the King had no means of preventing them. We kept the secret of our weakness to ourselves; to the foreign ambassadors we boasted of the disposition of the great majority of the French, of the strength of the Royalist party, which was reviving everywhere, even in the Chamber of Deputies. We spoke of speedy defections in the army. We must have been partially successful in producing belief; for till the battle of Waterloo, where Bonaparte, France, and the King were all conquered together, the foreigners were convinced that they could not execute their designs without the concurrence of His Majesty, and it will soon be seen that they themselves proposed measures that proved this conviction.

The War Minister, according to promise, sent me the papers concerning the Marine Department. They could not be of much importance, consisting of some despatches come by way of England, and sent by vessels that had heard of the events in France at sea or when touching at ports; a correspondence with M. de la Chatre, our ambassador in London, on the part that England would take with regard to our colonies if they declared for Bonaparte; lastly, the list of officers and administrators of the Navy who were with the King,

and requested to receive the same salary as the land officers, according to their relative rank. All these things put together did not supply a very great body of work; yet they took up my mornings, because I filled all the posts of my department—minister, director, and even copyist. The regulation to be made provisionally for the disposal of the officers of the Navy furnished the subject of a multiplied correspondence. I regretted to observe, by the list of these officers, that, if those of the old navy were not all there, at least a good number were present who had forgotten their years in order to follow the King, and offer him their old swords; while in order to find the officers of the new navy it was necessary to go down to the rank of cadet or midshipman. But I forget M. Henri de Rignay, captain of a frigate, and nephew of M. Louis. It is true he was in no hurry to arrive, not making his appearance at Ghent till during the later days of our stay, but his name did not the less appear in the list.

Yet I extracted from these small occupations occasion for work with the King one day in the week. I always began by talking with him of naval business, as it gave me the right of entry. Then the conversation turned of itself to the affairs of France. Afterwards I gave an account of what I had picked up during the week, by correspondence with Paris, and even in the streets of Ghent; and I made use of the art I had learned in the Ministry of Police of amusing the King while seeming to do business with him. So I found him again just as he had formerly been with me. He himself informed me of his hopes, and communicated to me his security, which was quite complete. It is not that he was under any illusion as to the disposition of France towards his family. He always attributed the catastrophe that had sent him to Ghent to the army; he recognised that it had auxiliaries in interests born of the Revolution; but he

confidently thought France could not do without him, and that, if there still remained a large number who were opposed to him, the wishes of these men would have to bend to necessity. This work with the King, and the attendance at his court on Sunday, after mass, composed my communications with His Majesty.

On Sunday, the King's mass was at noon, at Ghent as formerly at Versailles, and latterly at Paris. His Majesty everywhere preserved the dignity of King of France as best he could. He came to the Cathedral with his brother in his carriage; the officers on duty occupied a second; then, as was natural, came that of the Duke de Feltre. The rest of the French assembled from all the streets of Ghent, and formed a sufficiently diverting assembly. The church, although very large, was filled by the congregation, all showing great respect to the King, for, after his arrival, no one remained seated. The mass was heard, even by the French, with a reverence of which the King and his brother set the example. The inhabitants of Ghent, attached to the Catholic religion, were greatly touched by this, and loudly said that nothing could be so fortunate for Belgium as its union with France, under princes as pious as those.

The King added some communications, by favour, to the ordinary interviews that the Ministers might have with him. In the week of my arrival I was invited to dinner, and so was M. Louis the same day. His pleasure was small enough, for he seemed to think that my arrival had been awaited for the invitation. I could easily have told him, as was soon seen to be the case, that the King brought together that day all the Ministers present at Ghent, and that my coming certainly counted for nothing in such a matter. The King, all his Court, and the Duke de Durazzo in particular, for having sent the letters of invitation, were not the less abused in

every way. He even threatened to excuse himself on pretext of illness, a course from which I took no pains to dissuade my friend, as I knew very well that he had no such desire.

The dinner-party was composed, as I had foreseen, of the King's brother, the great officers on duty, MM. Dambray, De Febre, De Blacas, Louis, and myself. The King did the honours with the politeness of the ancient Court, and the personal grace which he added to it. At each course he offered to help the guests to the dish before him, and found, in so doing, opportunities of distributing round the table kindly glances and pleasant words. He carved the roast with rare dexterity, and as if in his youth he had been in the practice of acting with grace even in the smallest details. It is not, after all, such a very small merit for the master of a house, even if a King, to know how to do the honours of his table. If the host be of very superior rank to his guests, the attentions he pays them become favours which are more acceptable than the delicacies he lays before them. If the rank of both is the same, the entertainer assumes, by his politeness and attention, a position superior to that of his equals. Formerly, the table was enlivened by its pleasant speeches, amiable conversation, and expansion of heart, and the gravest of ancient historians did not think it beneath him to give us a treatise on it. Now people are very much at their ease on this point as on many others. For some time the interest of a dinner had been reduced to the mere sensual pleasure derived from the delicacies that decorated the table. This caprice did not last long. Now the dinner is no more than a necessity imposed by nature, and no longer disguised by the gaiety, the cordiality, and the good manners with which it was associated by our ancestors.

After dinner the King went into the drawing-room;

then he received the homage of some persons, and then Monsieur's whist-table was made up of M. de Luxembourg, M. de Durazzo, and myself. The King, seated in his arm-chair near the table, expressed his opinion of the tricks. He applied to this task a power of memory and a degree of attention which, in relation to such matters, no one has ever possessed in a higher degree. He remarked the smallest mistakes, and could tell the cards left in the partners' hands to the very last trick; he did so two or three times. M. Louis remained all the time we were playing without any one to speak to, and without even the power of relieving his silence by gesture. He came away disgusted, protested he had never been so wearied in his life, and vowed he would never be caught again.

His political interest was thus entirely directed to the Ministers of foreign powers. According to him Talleyrand had once more saved the House of Bourbon at the Congress of Vienna. He had the affairs of France in his hands, and would arrange them as he should agree with the Sovereigns or their representatives, without caring for these people (that is to say, the King and Princes), who understood nothing, and were only fit to spoil everything.

The delay of Talleyrand's arrival in Ghent gave some weight to the assertions of M. Louis. He had been pressed in vain to come and join the King; but he remained at the waters of Carlsbad, where he waited to see what development would be given to the resolutions of Congress, in order to determine on the part which he should himself play. This absence of his principal Minister gave the King some uneasiness, and there was cause for more in the conduct of the Duke of Orléans.

This prince had left Lille twenty-four hours after the King, and that had given him time enough to let Marshal

Mortier, who commanded the division, and the other generals know that he did not altogether approve the line of conduct pursued since the Restoration. He had given a pledge of his opinion by immediately leaving the Continent and going to England. In order to appreciate the interest which the Duke of Orléans took in the choice of a place of residence, I must here mention that the Duke de Berri was in command at Alost, fifteen miles from Ghent, a camp where the remains of the King's household troops were assembled, with a small number of individual officers and soldiers, and young men from the schools, drawn to follow the King's steps by the ardour of their loyalty. This little army, though entirely disorganised, daily received recruits, and would have obtained more if the King's finances had allowed it; but whatever it was, we made a great noise about it in France and abroad. It was recommended by the name of the prince at its head, by some officers of distinction composing its staff; and to speak the truth, it must be admitted that this feeble body was the real army of the King of France. So the place for the princes of his house was there. And yet the Duke of Orléans did not think it his, because he seemed decided not to put himself, for any cause or in any circumstances, in opposition to French soldiers whom he had before commanded, and with a cockade different from that under which he had seen his first service. That reason determined him to select England for his abode.

Thus the King was not easy about the Duke of Orléans. I had remarked that every time I mentioned that prince to him, he kept silence. Even one day, when I had given him a memoir which treated hypothetically of the danger that might arise to the elder from the younger branch of the house of Bourbon, he let the paper fall from his hands after reading it, and heaving a deep sigh; then

he hastily introduced a different subject, as if to remove an unpleasant one from his mind. This old uneasiness was necessarily increased by the absence of the Duke of Orléans. His Majesty wrote to him to invite him to come and join the King of France and the princes of his family, with whom he had promised that he and his should for the future be inseparably united. Such was, indeed, the condition of the pardon granted by the King, or, in other words, of the reconciliation of the two branches. The Duke of Orléans did not accept the King's invitation, but excused himself by a letter couched in the most respectful forms, even amounting to expressions of feeling, in which, however, the motives that kept him back were still perceptible. The prince replied equally cautiously to a second letter of His Majesty's, explaining himself more fully. Some one was sent to him in England, who succeeded no better; and it was evident to the King that the younger branch of his house, without having views hostile to the elder, proposed at least a different line of conduct, and pursued it with great address and scrupulousness.

So passed the time with us at Ghent, with some court duties, a little unimportant business, a glimmering of hope, and the first indications of impatience. We had been invited to dine with the King a second time, and things had gone exactly as the time before, except that I had not the honour of making up Monsieur's whist-table.

But the events going on in France excited our interest to the highest point. Napoleon had ceased to promise the return of Marie-Louise, to speak of his good understanding with the house of Austria, or to cherish hopes of peace. He gathered the people in the Champ de Mai, to proclaim what he so singularly termed *The Additional Act to the Constitutions of the Empire*, had deputies

elected, himself nominated peers, and while with one hand he set up his *additional* machine, with the other he prepared means of resistance to Europe banded against him. At Ghent the court party pretended to pay but little attention to what was passing in France, for it centred all its hopes in the arms of foreigners. Many of us, and I was one, did not share this feeling; for the most ardent of our wishes would have been that France should owe everything to her own efforts. Let us do justice, however, to Louis XVIII. He would have shared these desires, had it been possible to realise them. In any case, he read the French papers diligently, made comments on them, and asked us, when the subject came before us, about the persons composing the Chamber of Deputies, and what might be hoped or feared from them. I was in his cabinet the day the *Moniteur* was received, containing the nomination of the new Chamber of Peers. M. de Blacas read it, and each slightly known name provoked an exclamation of surprise or disdain from the bystanders. When the reading was finished, the King said—

"Hand me the list to read; it is worth the trouble."

The King pretended to read it, and then letting the paper fall on the table, he added—

"For my part I like the list well, for I do not find the name of Semonville in it: this will not last."

However, the foreign troops were drawing near our frontiers, and Napoleon was going to put himself at the head of his army. We could not remain idle while events on which depended the lot of France were about to be enacted. The King summoned his council. It was then agreed how desirable it would be if the foreign troops only entered France in the King's name, and if in each army His Majesty was represented by a commission of his own selection. This commission should have, if not under his orders, at least under his direction, the

commissaries of the allied armies. He alone should have the right to order requisitions in money or in kind, and to dispose of what might be found in the public chest. Speaking in the name and as the delegate of the King of France, he would impose on the people the sacrifices required by a state of war. These sacrifices, moreover, ought not to be regarded as more than advances made by the provinces occupied, to be restored soon after by a contribution from the whole of France. This project was communicated to the ambassadors of the foreign powers, who thought it a very prudent one. MM. de Beurnonville and Capelle proceeded to Brussels, to the headquarters of the Duke of Wellington, who for his part agreed. A short convention was prepared about this matter, to pass between the English plenipotentiary, clothed with the powers of the allied sovereigns, and the minister for foreign affairs of the King of France, represented at Ghent by the Marquis de Jaucourt. The King named as his commissioners General Beurnonville to the Prussian army, M. de Lally-Tollendal to that of England, M. Vaublanc to the Emperor of Germany, M. Capelle to Bavaria and the Confederation of the Rhine. I was charged to draw up a paper of instructions for these commissioners, and MM. de Vaublanc and De Capelle were associated with me in the work, as they had both been prefects as well as myself, and had experience in such matters. The foreign powers then acted honestly with us. The Duke of Wellington, who was better qualified than any of us to appreciate the warlike genius of the Emperor, did not expect to get the better of him so easily as he did on the field of Waterloo. He had no doubt of eventual success, but had no hope of obtaining it till after a vigorous defence in the interior of France, which, stirred up by Napoleon, would have prolonged the contest. So the foreign powers thought it advisable to

enter the provinces only in the name of the King of France, and there to proclaim his authority, under which not only the royalists, but the friends of order and all who had anything to lose might rally. The spectacle of one province, occupied by foreigners it is true, but governed in the King's name and by agents of his choice, and thus restored to tranquillity, ought to induce the next to submit. The pacification of the interior would thus be effected step by step, by good examples and continued acts of moderation. They would be spared the necessity of acts of violence, which, though imposing peace for a moment, would leave in the heart wounds that would be long of healing. The Duke of Wellington entered perfectly into this policy; and it would have been applied had not the allies conquered so speedily.

The drawing up of these instructions had rendered me more intimate with General Beurnonville. When I went to visit him, I found him talking strategy for the benefit of the courtiers, including the grand almoner and the ecclesiastics he brought with him. The result of each lesson was that Napoleon could make no resistance wherever he showed himself. On the Meuse he was enveloped and taken with his whole army; on the Rhine he was exterminated; in Flanders there were no more resources; in Luxemburg still less; returned to France, he would be pursued post haste. He showed all these points on a great number of maps, in which he had carefully marked out all the lines Bonaparte could take, and the exact spot on each where he could be stopped, and destroyed if desired. These maps covered his desk, and even a large portion of the floor of the room, and the general stood upright in the midst, beating his man right and left with a marvellous assurance and great volubility. I was by chance at one of these performances, at which the grand almoner was also present. He was listening

with extreme attention, holding his episcopal hat in his hand, and apparently, as was his habit, biting the corner of it. I ventured to risk some observations that were unsuccessful. The general assumed a lofty tone with me, and I was defenceless when committing myself against a man who beat Napoleon as he liked. I was opening my mouth to avow my ignorance, when Cardinal de Talleyrand, laying aside his incomparable gentleness for a moment, sharply passed the hat he held in his hand under his arm, and said to me, "Allow me, sir; you do not understand war like the general who has waged it so long: we must listen, for he knows more of it than we do." I quite agreed with his eminence, and offered my most humble excuses to the master as well as to the great and docile scholar.

Pierre Riel, Marquis of Beurnonville, died in the possession of dignities reserved for the most remarkable services. And yet his name is not mixed up with any of the great events that have marked the history of the last thirty years: it does not raise recollections of Fleurus, Marengo, or Hohenlinden. Honours went in search of Marshal Beurnonville, and his whole life showed that fortune is as capricious in her affections as her antipathies.

Pierre Riel was born at Champigneul, a village of Champagne, six miles from the little town of Bar-sur-Aube. His father was a labourer, a more honourable than honoured profession, which is not at all respected in this mountainous, sterile country, where no inhabitant raises himself above poverty. The Marshal's father had one son and three daughters. He conceived a lofty ambition for a man of his class—that of making his only son an ecclesiastic, who might, with time, prudence, and some interest, become a country priest. Alone, he would not have been able to pay the expense of the education of his son; but zeal for Holy Orders had already become

rather cold, and the lords of parishes, the rich holders of benefices, and the heads of religious houses assisted poor fathers of families who offered their children for an ecclesiastical career. The Abbot of Clairvaux, seigneur of Champigneul, took the young Riel under his protection. At first he was sent to the college at Bar-sur-Aube, where he learned just Latin enough for the priesthood, and passed on to the seminary of Saint Nicholas, at Paris. He carried thither a stature of five feet eight inches, a handsome face, and a great fund of good-nature, dispositions naturally happy, but not without danger for a collegian of eighteen. The able Riel could not escape. He was wickedly denounced to the Archbishop of Paris, M. de Beaumont, who would not listen to reason on two points—Jansenism and lightness of morals. Riel was obliged to depart from the seminary, and returned to his father at Champigneul. His misadventure did not lose him the protection of the Abbot of Clairvaux. As the attempt to make a priest of him had failed, they tried to make him a lawyer, but with no better success. He entered as clerk to a lawyer of Bar-sur-Aube, a friend of Diderot, professing the same opinions as that writer on the subject of religion. Riel found these opinions much more to his taste than the theological lectures of the seminary of Saint Nicholas; he did more, he had the temerity to put them in practice.

There is in existence, among the mountains near the town of Bar-sur-Aube, a hamlet under the protection of Saint Laurence. The pilgrimage to Saint Laurent, on the feast-day of this saint, is in high favour with the youth of both sexes. Riel, and two madcaps like himself, went on this pilgrimage together. In the chapel of the hamlet, on a rustic pedestal, was placed the statue of the patron, with his face turned to the door. The saint was clothed in his dalmatic, the light drapery of which was not un-

like a ball-dress. The artist had wished to raise the arms to heaven, as in the expectation of martyrdom; but the posture was a failure, and the saint held out his arms in line with his body, as if ready to dance a *farandole.** The appropriateness or the absurdity did not escape the madcaps, who, taking a hand on each side of the saint, tried to make him dance. The holy man resisted a little, then fell on the pavement and broke his nose. The indignant inhabitants ran to attack the desecrators, but they were lucky enough to escape. Public indignation galloped after them to Bar-sur-Aube; and the King's attorney, pressed by the clamour, was obliged to bring an accusation against them.

It was near enough to the time when the Chevalier de Labarre had been broken on the wheel for a similar joke, and the Parliament of Paris, cut to the quick by the philosophers' abuse, would have liked nothing better than to try the same punishment again. The families of the two comrades of Riel obtained sealed warrants of imprisonment against them, or rather for them, so as to get them out of the way of judicial pursuit. Riel was not of note enough in society to deserve the favour of such an order. He took refuge in Paris, hid himself as best he could, and soon took the prudent precaution of putting the ocean between himself and the Parliament of Paris. He enlisted in a colonial battalion, and went to the Isle of France as a soldier. The young Riel arrived in the Isle of France, a private in a battalion. He had brought a little money from Europe, a good figure, a handsome face, bravery, and the varnish of cultivation given by two or three educations fruitlessly begun. It was enough to make him remarkable in a corps badly off for officers, and still worse for soldiers.

* Dance of Provence.

At the end of six months, Riel was made sergeant-major. This was the beginning of the fortune of Marshal de Beurnonville. On his first landing, he had met Mrs. MacFields, a lady of Irish birth, a widow, rich, and very pretty, to judge by the portraits that the Marshal was delighted to exhibit soon after his return to France. Mrs. MacFields had been courted by M. de Souilhac, Governor of the Isle of France, by whose credit Beurnonville had speedily reached the grade of lieutenant. He afterwards married Mrs. MacFields, and entered the Colonial Assembly. Giddy and dissipated youths almost always become men of action in riper age. The Marshal confirmed the truth of this maxim. He had no sooner entered the Assembly than he commenced an attack on the governor and superintendent, and wrote volumes on abuses which required reform, and on improvements which it was desirable to introduce. He was undeniably right on some points; but he wanted to be right in all, and that was an offence. After some very sharp discussions that might have troubled the peace of the colony, Beurnonville departed for France, by his own desire, as he said; by an order from the King, according to M. de Souilhac. What is less doubtful is, that he brought back from the Isle of France a capital of twelve thousand pounds. He was no longer a young fugitive from a seminary or from a lawyer's office, but a man formed by travel; and wealth, as it always does, enhanced his natural gifts.

The first use he made of this fortune was to buy, for three thousand two hundred pounds, a commission as sub-lieutenant of the Hundred Swiss of the Count d'Artois. This position brought him in very little money; but what was of much higher value in the eyes of the young lieutenant, it gave him the rank of captain and the Cross of Saint Louis. Adorned with this double decoration, he

came to display it on the theatre of his first exploits. He returned to Bar-sur-Aube in the summer of 1789. His presence, and the Cross of Saint Louis, made as much sensation there as the capture of the Bastille. Following the usage of the time, he was a subject of admiration to some, astonishment for others, and envy to all the world. The part he played in the Revolution is too well known for me to enter into any details respecting it.

When the result of the Battle of Waterloo was known, the immediate decision was to return to France. Talleyrand, who was not informed until a very late period of His Majesty's determination, went to the King at once.

"I had asked an audience of your Majesty to-day to give an account of what passed at Vienna, and the state of affairs."

"I could not grant it, for I was in much haste to start. But put it in writing, and send it to me."

This reply signified the dismissal of Talleyrand, who could not misunderstand it, and answered at once—

"I have a favour to ask of your Majesty, namely, permission to go to the waters of Carlsbad, which are necessary for my health."

"I grant it willingly. Those waters are excellent. I hope to see you again, M. de Talleyrand."

When the King had finished, he went downstairs; and as he was entering his carriage, His Majesty saw me as he passed, and said, "Good morning, Count Beugnot: you follow me."

I bowed low, and, after the King was gone, I hastened to bid a last adieu to M. de Blacas, who was still more astonished than myself at the reception of Talleyrand, and, besides, was uneasy at it.

"Talleyrand," said M. de Blacas, "has made a very bad calculation. I injured him in no way; I even thought he was indispensable to the King's business.

We might have come to an understanding, and everyone would have been gainers. Now, what will these intrigues come to?"

"Add," replied I, "that it is cruel at such a moment to have parted from the King a friend whose society was so pleasant and necessary to him."

"Necessary to a certain point," replied M. de Blacas. "The King, I am sure, feels some pain at this moment, and will miss me for the first days; but he will insensibly get used to do without me, and in time find where to place his affections."

I know that Talleyrand's return was stormy. He was above measure enraged at the ingratitude and extravagance of the King. When I presented myself to him, anger had given way to expressions of pity for the unfortunate man, and of his happiness at having nothing more to do with him; while he rejoiced in the prospect of the pleasures that awaited him at the waters of Carlsbad, for M. de Talleyrand had no doubt he should be accompanied there by all the ministers.

I was in no haste to follow the King, for I was informed he would spend two days at Cambrai, and I wished to know what would be the result of the dismissal of Talleyrand. Meanwhile it was settled we should go and dine with M. Duval, Mayor of Mons. This M. Duval was a man of good birth, and originally very rich. His son had been auditor at the Council of State when I was a member of it, and was considered a most hopeful young man. He received me as I went through with touching cordiality, and it was not his fault I did not put up at his father's house. He had asked me to dinner; and when I told my colleagues it was arranged that we should all go, as M. Duval would have considered himself affronted if a Minister remaining for dinner at Mons had not availed himself of his hospitality. Such

was, indeed, the character of this honourable man. He had had his house built in a way that adapted it for the exercise of a magnificent hospitality. There were great reception-rooms in it, a large concert-room, which, in case of necessity, could be used as a theatre, extensive offices, and stables all of a piece. This house had received all the persons of distinction who had passed through Mons from the reign of Joseph II. to that of Louis XVIII.; and certainly there had been a good number of them, for between these two reigns consideration had been acquired at a very cheap rate.

The dinner was sumptuous. The master of the house did the honours, with some Flemish traditions, which in no way interfered with the arrangement of the feast. For instance, I never in my life saw such a number of bottles, all ranged in order of battle, and filled with the most esteemed wines. M. de Talleyrand displayed there a virtue I did not before know that he possessed—that of being good company. He was in charming spirits, and poured out his fancies in pleasant stories and piquant bon-mots. I had never seen him in such a flow of spirits, and it was evident that he must formerly have held his place at the old suppers of the Temple, with as much distinction as he had recently done at the Congress of Vienna. Assuredly, no one who saw or heard him would have imagined that he was a Minister who had been dismissed with disgrace only a few hours before. Was Talleyrand exulting in his good fortune at being rid of the affairs of France, now really heavier and more difficult than ever? Or was this apparent hilarity only the mask beneath which he concealed the anger and disappointment by which he was devoured? The second supposition is certainly the most probable; but what kind of a man, then, must Talleyrand be?

I took M. Louis in my carriage, and asked him, after

dinner, to tell me what he thought of doing, for I should start next morning early for Cambrai. M. Louis wished me a good journey, and told me that he intended to go to Carlsbad with Talleyrand; and that, as M. de Jaucourt also accompanied them, I should be the only member of the cabinet who did not go there with them, which would be an unfortunate proceeding, and in England would be enough to injure any Minister. I showed him that there was a vast difference between the unheard-of circumstances in which we were, and the case of a regular government like that of England, where all the Ministers were obliged to go out before the opposition, as it is the plan followed by the defeated party which has failed in the House; that we were not under a regular government, as we had none at all; and that, in a case of such extremity, the King's servants had no right to separate from him. M. Louis got angry, as he always does when contradicted, and ran to tell Talleyrand of what he called my treason. Talleyrand received the confidence in a manner that was easy to foresee. He regarded me with great superciliousness, considering it quite unimportant to him whether I went to Carlsbad or Cambrai, and shortly answered that I was right to do as I pleased. I went to him the same evening, and found him not the least prejudiced against me. Both destinations were spoken of very freely. I said I should go to Cambrai with General Beurnonville; but yet should not do so without coming for the last time to receive the orders of the Prince.

When I came next morning, an incident which I was far from expecting had occurred. A courier had just arrived bearing letters from the Chancellor addressed to all the Ministers (including Talleyrand), to signify that the King would hold a meeting of his council at Cambrai on an early day. Louis and De Jaucourt, who had already been informed, opened the discussion at once.

M. Louis strongly insisted on going to Carlsbad, as really nothing could be done with people who changed from black to white after that fashion. Talleyrand said that it seemed to him just as right to go after the letter as before it; and De Jaucourt, a very honourable man, mild and polite in his manners, but accustomed to think as M. de Talleyrand did, was now less than ever inclined to act in opposition to him. I hazarded some observations to the same effect, only somewhat more developed, as those I had already made to M. Louis. I gained nothing by it, and their resolution seemed to me quite fixed. This caused me a good deal of uneasiness. The King must have acted under the influence of powerful motives in recalling the dismissal which he had signified to M. de Talleyrand. It must have been a very powerful voice that induced him to recall a Minister whom in his heart he disliked, who had just attacked him in a point most dear to him, and in avenging himself on whom he had experienced singular pleasure. It was impossible to misunderstand whose was the voice. It was that of the Duke of Wellington, who had become intimate with Talleyrand at the Congress of Vienna, and who, in the name of the Powers, again demanded him, as the only man capable of reconciling Europe with France. If, as was very probable, such was the case, how could the King, in case of refusal, excuse himself for having got rid of such a man?—and whom could he put in his place? While tormented with these thoughts I met M. Laborie, who, though all the time devoted to Talleyrand, yet was of the party for Cambrai. I told him how anxious I was, and how much I regretted it.

"I see only one resource," said he; "in the Cardinal de Perigord, who, most fortunately, is still at Mons."

"What notion have you got?" I exclaimed. "What influence can the old Cardinal have upon a heart which has been long chilled?"

"A good deal," answered M. Laborie. "He can tell him that the Restoration is his only means of finding favour before Heaven and before men; and he will summon him, in the names of his ancestors and of all the saints in paradise, to aid in its re-establishment. I am much deceived if M. de Talleyrand does not yield."

"If so, run and bring on your shoulders, if need be, the only exorcist that has any power over the Mephistopheles of France."

M. Laborie really passed by me a moment later, conducting the uncle to the house of the nephew, and made me a sign to follow. I entered with them. The Cardinal went alone into Talleyrand's room, while we remained in a neighbouring apartment, the door of which was open. I could see the two personages walking up and down for half an hour—an unheard-of effort for the younger of the two. The Cardinal was just as usual, always holding his hat in his hand, and gnawing the rim of it; the only difference being that a little more activity than usual might be perceived in his action and step. Talleyrand did not seem to be making objections, his attitude rather announcing respect or assent. It was both; for the Cardinal, as he went out, said to M. Laborie that Talleyrand would go next day to Cambrai.

I always found that Prince full of veneration for his uncle, Cardinal Perigord, however great might be the distance between them in religion and politics; but I cannot think that this feeling alone determined him on this important occasion. There had been time for him to inform the Duke of Wellington of the scene that had taken place between him and the King; and there was no doubt that the King's improbable and unwilling return to Talleyrand must again be attributed to English intervention. The Minister, who always knew what was going on, only yielded from a thorough knowledge of the matter,

and in the hope that all these mistakes of the King would only the more securely fix the authority in his hands.

M. de Talleyrand is faithful to the rule of proportioning the number of his words to the gravity of the determination that he announces. The more important this determination is, the more concise is he. He knows that power is no longer imposing when it gives explanations; he only told his friends and household that he should start at ten next morning for Cambrai. I was told by M. Louis; for I would not go and see him, as soon as it was nearly certain that he would go. By chance, my opinion had prevailed; and I know nothing so silly as to make a parade of a little triumph over superior men who have triumphed a thousand times over you.

Next day I went to Cambrai, with M. Louis in my carriage. He was much out of humour, and kept on saying that he regretted very much that Talleyrand had changed his opinion, for it would have been seen what those people could do when left to themselves. I answered that the sight might be worth something, but that we ran the risk of paying too much for it, if we ventured the destiny of France upon such a hazard; and that there was no real Frenchman or honest man who, in Talleyrand's place, would not have done the same. There was no way of making Louis hear reason, till it was clearly shown to him that all power had passed into the hands of Talleyrand, and that he would divide it among his friends, according to their ability and their fidelity.

When we reached Cambrai, we went to pay our respects to the King and princes. The King received the Ministers, including Talleyrand, with his usual affability. The scene at Mons now appeared only a dream. The council was appointed for next day at ten o'clock; and as it was necessary to prepare for it, we met in the evening at Talleyrand's hotel. There we had some indica-

tions of the plan which this Minister intended to follow, and to impose on the Cabinet which he was about to form.

I have already had occasion to remark that in any matter of business Talleyrand avoided long explanations. He started as if from a settled point, from the assumption that after his departure for the Congress of Vienna the Government had gone from one folly to another; whence the conclusion was easy. It had now to be publicly acknowledged how deplorable this course had been, and a different one must be followed. To attain the first object the King ought to make a proclamation, reflecting severely on his late Government, and provisionally appoint a commission to take charge of business till a Ministry should be organised. Talleyrand condemned me to prepare this proclamation and the decree instituting the commission. It was arranged that I should submit my work next day at the meeting of the Ministers before the council. In both these papers I had preserved the moderation and dignity that I thought should never be departed from when the King of France is made to speak. Talleyrand and Louis thought that the proclamation did not attain the end proposed, but there was no time to prepare another. So they were contented with cramming my draught here and there with the most strange avowals and most imprudent promises on the King's part. These portions, added afterwards, were in most striking contrast with the rest of the document; so that this proclamation, thus inlaid, became a perpetual contradiction and an outrage on good taste. I tried in vain to avoid the reading of my work to the council, in the shape they had given it. Talleyrand smiled, and told me I understood nothing about it, and that the council might very well improve on what still displeased me. As to the ordinance that instituted a provisional government, I was less unfortunate. I had

been desired as a salient point to insist on unity of administration, and referring all the arrangements of the ordinance to this unity. The task was the easier, as the object was visible; and they thought I had performed it fairly.

The council met; it was composed of Talleyrand, Dampray, De Feltre, De Jaucourt, Beurnonville, and myself. After a few words from Talleyrand with respect to the subject on which the King had allowed the council to deliberate, I began to read the proposed proclamation as it had been made by the corrections added to it. The King allowed me to read to the end, and then, with an expression which betrayed some feeling, he ordered me to read it again. When I had finished this second reading, the Count d'Artois spoke, complaining angrily of the terms in which this proclamation was drawn up. The King was made to beg pardon for the mistakes he had made; he had been made to say that he had allowed himself to be drawn on by his partiality, and to promise that for the future he would pursue a different course of conduct. Such expressions have only one fault, that of degrading royalty; for, besides that, they either say too much or nothing at all. Talleyrand answered—

"His Royal Highness will forgive me for differing with him. I think those expressions necessary, and therefore well placed. The King has made mistakes; his affections have led him astray: there is not anything excessive."

Monsieur replied, "Am I indirectly pointed at?"

"Yes, since His Royal Highness has placed the discussion on that footing; Monsieur has done a great deal of harm."

"The Prince de Talleyrand forgets himself."

"So I am afraid; but truth compels me."

The Duke de Berri, with a tone of scarcely restrained anger, exclaimed, "It is only in the presence of the

King that I can suffer any one to behave so to my father before me, and I should be glad to know . . . . ."

At these words, spoken in a still louder tone than the rest, the King made a sign to the Duke de Berri, and said—

"Enough, my nephew; it is my duty alone to form a judgment on what is said in my presence and in my council. Gentlemen, I can approve neither the terms of the proclamation nor the discussion of which it has been the subject. The composer must go over his work, and not lose sight of the lofty sense of propriety that must be preserved when I am made to speak."

The Duke de Berri, pointing to me, said, "It is not he that has strung together all that nonsense."

The King: "Nephew, cease your interruption, if you please. Gentlemen, I repeat that I have heard this discussion with great regret. Let us proceed to another subject."

I then read the proposed ordinance for establishing a commission of government. I had not yet inserted in it any proper names; and nothing could be seen in it but a temporary measure of evident necessity.

If this measure had been more important than it was, the agitation which had been excited by the scene just described was still too great to permit of the application of our minds to any other subject. The project was not thwarted by any difficulty, and the remainder of the time of the council was taken up by listening to the different reports of the War Ministry.

The same day the King desired that his return to his states should be celebrated by a religious festival—a solemn mass of thanksgiving followed by a Te Deum and Benediction. The Ministers were invited to attend, and I found myself in the choir, next to Talleyrand.

He was in a good humour, for he had seen the King

for a moment before the ceremony, and had found him docile, that is to say, resigned. In the afternoon I employed myself in correcting the proclamation, and when I had got it into a form in which I thought it might no longer be displeasing to the King, and might meet the views of Talleyrand, I sent it to the latter; and he, pressed by M. Louis, erased a good deal and also added something. He did both carelessly, and carried this paper, which had been so sharply contested, to the King for signature, in the imperfect condition in which it was signed and published. I did not know why the King did not affix his signature to the ordinance directing the establishment of a provisional government. This ordinance was returned to me along with the proclamation, but unsigned, and containing only the names of the persons who were to compose the provisional government, written in Talleyrand's hand. I have kept it, and find in it the names of MM. Louis, Jaucourt, Châteaubriand, Feltre, Beugnot, Richelieu, Pasquier; and Talleyrand as president. I observed to Talleyrand that this ordinance had come back to me unsigned, and tried to find out the reason. He replied in the generalities he had always at command, when, though not disposed to make a distinct reply, he consented to say something.

On leaving Cambrai the King slept at Roye. I followed with M. Louis in my carriage, that of Talleyrand being a short distance before us. My travelling companion pointed out to me that as we were leaving Talleyrand alone, the time might hang heavy upon him. He offered, therefore, to keep him company, leaving me for that purpose. To distract Talleyrand, M. Louis proposed to him to form a Ministry of different materials from that which had been projected at Cambrai; to appoint to it Jaucourt, Pasquier, Gouvion Saint Cyr, Louis; and to take what he called the *great leap*, by adding Fouché.

In this combination the Ministry of the Home Department remained vacant, Talleyrand reserving it for M. Pozzo di Borgo. He hoped by thus giving a real proof of confidence and deference to the Emperor of Russia, to make that prince retract the great prejudice or resentment that he felt towards him. It was almost settled. My friend M. Louis, whom I was taking back so kindly to Paris, had excluded me by his combination. He pretended that this was for my good. As I had been what he called the tool (*âme damnée*) of M. Blacas, I could not be included in the new Ministry; for that would expose me to violent opposition, perhaps even to ill-treatment. I might, however, be employed in a subordinate capacity, as, for instance, in introducing order and method into the different branches of the administration—a task for which I was well fitted. I must be made to occupy them all in succession, reserving for myself that which might suit me best, or even recalling me to the Ministry when by my services I had caused my past faults to be forgotten, and escaped from the public disfavour under which I then laboured. M. de Talleyrand had only half consented, for fear of creating another difficulty with the King, whom he supposed to be attached to me. M. Louis insisted, representing to him that it was to leave a friend of M. de Blacas in my person—an observer who would not fail to give him an account of what passed at the council, and to manœuvre for his return. The greater the attachment with which the King was supposed to regard me, with so much the more facility should I be able to perform such a part, and therefore so much the more necessary was it to remove me.

Having made these arrangements, M. Louis began, as soon as he reached the King, to make his puppets play. He presented to Talleyrand M. Gaillard, a counsellor at the Supreme Court of Appeal, an intimate friend of Fouché,

and his ambassador to the royalist party. Fouché was then member of the provisional government, the essence of whose mission was to get rid of the princes of the House of Bourbon at any price; and he sent to Roye the assurance that he was going to labour in their behalf. He begged that no one would be prevented by appearances, and promised success if a personal guarantee was given him. Talleyrand, pressed by M. Louis, received the ambassador, and gave the desired assurances, without much thinking how he could perform them; but it was essential to gain Fouché. Talleyrand did not fail to inform the Duke of Wellington of this conquest, and both rejoiced in having removed one of the greatest obstacles, as they believed, to the King's return.

M. Louis did me the honour to think me worthy of a little manœuvre. They brought forward a general, an elegant man and good speaker, whom his royalist ardour had brought to Roye, through all sorts of dangers, to relate the state of opinion in the capital. The news of the dismissal of M. de Blacas had been received there with enthusiasm; and so violent was the popular prejudice against that Minister, that he could not enter the capital without danger. It was there believed that I had been dismissed along with him, and my return as Minister would produce a very bad effect, inasmuch as, if it did not prove an obstacle to the return of the King, it would at least be an embarrassing circumstance. This foolish talk was gravely reported around the nomad council that was then at Roye; and M. Louis, who is known to be of timid habit, seemed quite afraid.

The truth is that at Paris they hardly thought of M. de Blacas, and still less of me. They were occupied with such lofty and pressing interests that they had no time left for such slight details. It was the moment when Napoleon had not even power to give effect to his second

abdication, and was intriguing at the Elysée, or rather allowing others to intrigue around him, to regain the command in some way or other, while the Chambers were occupied in the consideration of a constitution, without knowing to whom or when it would be of service, and were sending deputies to the foreign camp to ask for any other sovereign than a prince of the House of Bourbon. They took so little notice of what went on at Roye, that they did not even know that the King had arrived; and he was at the very gates of the capital, while they still supposed he was at Ghent, continuing at a distance his nominal reign of twenty years. Fouché alone was in the secret. From the first days of the Emperor's return, he had formed an opinion that this event would accomplish nothing,—only opening a chance, the issue of which was doubtful. From that time he had spread his nets in both camps. While in that of the Emperor, he made a display of severity, and even anger, against the partisans of the fallen family, he sent secret assurances to the Faubourg Saint Germain, and, in reality, kept on good terms with it. At the Tuileries he conducted his intrigues in person; at Ghent, by means of his emissaries. This double game had not escaped the notice of Réal, the prefect of police, but the Emperor gave little heed to his warnings. It was his destiny to be fascinated by Fouché in the fatal days that preceded his second abdication, as he had been by Talleyrand in those that preceded his first. These two men, long enemies, whose aversion the Emperor used to foster, had found a common ground of union—that of disgrace. Talleyrand made efforts to save Fouché from the shipwreck of the first restoration, and had constantly striven to bring him forward in the second, whether it were that he really thought him useful to his cause, or rather that he wished to have in public business a man whose presence explained, and in some sort justified,

the part he himself had taken in the events of the Revolution.

When he left Roye, the King went to dine at the Wood of Lihus. I then followed him, in M. de Jaucourt's carriage. M. Louis continued to amuse Talleyrand. At last, in my turn, I had become weary of being alone, and progressing very slowly, and had joined M. de Jaucourt,—always a piece of good fortune. As we advanced by this road to the capital, we began to perceive the traces of the passage of the enemies' light troops. Between the village of Cavilly and that of Gournay-sur-Aronde, they had burnt a poor widow's house. The neighbours had run away, and she alone remained sitting on a stone before her burning house. Two small, frightened children were clinging to her, and the mother was sobbing. We left our carriage, and asked the unhappy woman the cause of the fire; she told us shortly, hid her face in her hands, and went on crying. The little children went down on their knees, as if to pray to us.

"But, my poor woman," said M. de Jaucourt, "the King has just gone by; did not he stop?"

"I do not know, sir. Two great carriages went by, with people about them; but they went too fast."

"That prevented the King from seeing your house burning; but take heart, we are going after him; and when he knows how it was burnt, he will have it rebuilt. Meanwhile, my poor woman, what are you and your children going to do?"

"Sir, I do not know. Heaven will not let us die on the spot."

"No, my dear; no. Come, here is something for your more pressing wants." M. de Jaucourt presented her with a couple of livres, and I gave as much.

"Heaven sees you," cried the poor widow, "and will recompense you. We will pray for you."

The mother and two small children flung themselves on their knees and prayed aloud. M. de Jaucourt and I got into our carriage, with our eyes full of tears. Our first movement was one of natural pity; our next, criticism, and almost indignation. It was impossible that the King, going so close by a burning house, should not have seen it! Was it possible he did not stop, or ask the cause of the misfortune, or open his purse and his arms to the victims? We sought for excuses, but we scarcely found any, though this one occurred to me. It was possible that the King might have been asleep in his carriage when he passed this house, and that no one ventured to awake him.

M. de Jaucourt said: "That is the most plausible excuse, but . . . ."

"Why but? You know the King better than I do; is it possible . . . .?"

"I cannot decide; we shall soon see, and he will himself settle our doubts."

We arrived at the place where the King had stopped for dinner, and made haste to present ourselves to him. It was agreed that M. de Jaucourt should congratulate him—a task which was committed to good hands, for no one united, in an equal degree, goodness of heart and grace of mind—and these two qualities are but one in M. de Jaucourt. After the customary salutations, he proceeded to the business.

"The King has had a prosperous journey; but he saw something on the road that could not have failed to pain him—a house on fire—a poor widow's, the mother of two young children, who all three stood stupefied by the disaster, without a human being offering to help them."

"Indeed," said the King, "I saw the house burning, and observed that no one was there to put it out."

M. de Jaucourt. "It had been set on fire by a detach-

ment of the allies' light troops, and the inhabitants of the village had fled at their approach."

The King. "It must have been something of the kind."

M. de Jaucourt. "It seems that they have plundered the country, for we were just told that there would be some trouble in providing the King's dinner."

The King. "Oh, be quite at your ease for that. Why, M. de Jaucourt, do not you know that the rabbits of this village are the finest and most tender in France —in France, you understand? I remember, thirty years ago; thirty years—wait a bit; just thirty-four years ago, I came into this country with the Marquis of Montesquieu and Chabrillant to visit a relation of the latter. I had some splendid rabbits to eat, that these people have a peculiar way of cooking and seasoning. I have been promised two for dinner, and shall not be badly off with them."

We were thus taken a long way from the poor woman, her children, and house on fire; how would M. de Jaucourt get back?

"Well, Beugnot," said the Marquis de Jaucourt to me, "was I right this morning, and did I not honour the King much in remaining in the region of doubt? I know the King, and, from the time he mentioned, he has been just the same as to-day. We have done our duty in making an attack upon him, but I did not expect much from it. Now we must make a collection among ourselves to send what we can get to-day to the poor woman; afterwards we will torment the Finance Minister for some help for her. The passing of two Ministers must not have been of more service to her than the King's."

These acts of kindness proceeded from the heart of M. de Jaucourt, and were accomplished.

CHAPTER XI.

St. Denis—M. Pasquier—The Bailli of Crussol—Perform the Duties of Secretary of State—Nomination of the Duc d'Otranto to the Ministry of Police—Character of Louis XVIII.—Formation of the Ministry—The Ministry of Marine given to M. de Jancourt—Undignified *Ruses*—The King's Return to Paris—The Abbé Louis and General Beurnonville—Jobbing in Ministries—The Bourbons twice imposed on France by Foreigners—M. Decazes—The Prussians and the Pont de Jena.

THE King next proceeded to Saint Denis, where he was to spend two days,—less for rest, after the journey, which had not been a fatiguing one, than to prepare for his entrance into Paris, about which, it was said, there might be some difficulty. This difficulty was the knotty point of the intrigue. Talleyrand had preceded the King, to go to meet the Duke of Wellington; and both had gone to Poissy, to a country house belonging to the mother of an old Minister of the Emperor's. Fouché had been invited to this interview, and in this conclave was determined the fate of the Government which was to be given to poor France, and an agreement was come to respecting the Ministry of Fouché.

I never understood why the Duke of Wellington was so zealous in his support of the Duke of Otranto. It is true that he was remarkably distrustful of the real feelings of France, and perhaps he had allowed himself to be persuaded that Fouché alone was master of the situation. Assuredly the colloquy at Poissy was enough to remove all objections to the entrance of the Duke into the council; but the Abbé Louis, who had not been

included in it, kept up his incessant plots around the King. He presented M. Pasquier to His Majesty. That gentleman had hastened from Paris to give an account of the state of the capital, no one knowing it better than he did, for he had long been prefect of police, and during the Hundred Days had placed at the King's service correspondence he had preserved in this department of the administration. M. Pasquier spoke to the King with that consummate art which enables him to examine all sides of a question without advancing the discussion one step; and as the King is in no haste to draw conclusions, even when the premises are very clearly established, they were less able to decide, after M. Pasquier had spoken, whether it was more expedient for the King to advance to Paris or to wait at Saint Denis. It is true that, for once, faithful to his instructions, M. Pasquier had slipped in a few words of praise of Fouché, and had lightly touched on the services he might render. Never, indeed, had his talent found a more suitable employment, for, after having disseminated doubt and difficulty, he allowed them to obtain a glimpse of the means of escaping from embarrassment; and that means had to be presented without causing too much alarm.

After this first envoy—or, rather, this first witness called and instructed by M. Louis—came another, of a very different kind, Bailli de Crussol. He was one of the most upright men of the time. He was not tampered with. He came in all sincerity to ask the King, in the name of the Faubourg Saint Germain, to retain Fouché as the Minister of Police. As I had long been known to him, he at first spoke to me. I retreated: I could not believe it. What! Bailli de Crussol, the last of our knights, the prototype of fidelity, come to propose such a choice to the brother of Louis XVI.! I reproached this honourable man rather sharply; but he always replied,—

"What is to be done? Fouché saved us all after the King was gone; it is owing to him alone that M. de Vitrolles was not shot; and, really, who are the enemies of the royal family in France? The Jacobins! Well, he has them under his thumb; and when he is in the service of the King, we may sleep with both ears shut. My dear M. Beugnot, we are old in the Faubourg Saint Germain. We have suffered too much, and must have rest."

I could easily have refuted all this; but there was no means of converting an honest man who, notwithstanding the painful astonishment inspired by such a proposition, allowed himself to be so deluded by his devotion to the King, and who had given his word to his friends. He saw the King, and remained some time in his cabinet. He told me, as he left the King, that His Majesty was shaken, but not decided. They had to make a last trial. The lady who had preserved the greatest influence on the mind of Louis XVIII., and who, by her good sense, was worthy of it, the Countess de Narbonne, was to undertake this duty. When we saw her arrive at Saint Denis, we concluded that the whole party was stirred up, and that it was impossible for the King to hold out.

While these machinations were in progress round the King, the Duke de Berri sent for me to tell him what was going on. I informed him, and he was indignant at it. I showed him two letters I had just received from Paris, in which it was said that the King's near approach to the capital had at first surprised, but soon reassured men's minds. This circumstance, and the approach of the foreign armies, had changed public opinion; and the sad episode of Napoleon's return was looked upon as ended. The King's return seemed quite natural, and no one was desirous of opposing it. The Prince asked me whether I had shown those letters to the King. I replied

that I was afraid of seeming to put one intrigue in opposition to another; and that I had no hope left of getting a hearing, when the contrary opinion was expressed on all sides, and by individuals who had a right to be respected. The Prince took the letters from my hand, and went to the King. He spoke warmly, and ended the conversation by asking His Majesty's permission to go in person to Paris, to ascertain, among the contradictory reports, what might really be depended on. The King allowed the Duke de Berri to go as near Paris as he liked; but absolutely forbade his passing the barrier. The Prince went out in his uniform of colonel of chasseurs, followed by one aide-de-camp alone. He was recognised as he passed, and saluted as affectionately as he would have been six months sooner. He advanced near enough to the barrier to see the body-guards walking very quietly in uniform in the Champs Elysées; but his religious respect for the King's order forbade his making a step beyond. The Prince returned more indignant than ever at the intrigue that kept the royal family captive at the gates of Paris. He proposed to the King to take him to sleep at the Tuileries that very night. His Majesty seemed well pleased at the report, but was not disposed to disturb himself till he had fresh assurances. However, Prince de Talleyrand and the Duke of Wellington came back from the dinner at Poissy; and M. Louis informed the Prince of the manner in which he had employed the time in his absence. M. Pasquier presented himself, and received a glance which was the harbinger of his future greatness. When Talleyrand had been fully informed of the ground on which they had placed the King, he made the Duke of Wellington, for whom the honour of giving the last blows was everywhere reserved, go before him into the cabinet. The Prince entered afterwards, and presented the list of ministers to the King, as if it had

been the work of His Majesty's will, rather than his own. The name of Fouché did not appear in it, for a special ordinance was necessary to reinstate the Police Minister, with whom the Restoration till then had expected to dispense; and the appointment of a Minister naturally followed the decree that created the ministry.

During the King's journey I filled the post of Secretary of State—that is to say, I carried the few official acts which came before the council to His Majesty for signature. I kept the minutes, and gave copies of them when requisite. Talleyrand asked me if I had to get any signatures from the King on that day, and on my reply in the affirmative, he asked me to add to them an order to re-establish the Ministry of Police, and nominate the Duke of Otranto thereto. I did as he requested, and appeared before the King with my portfolio, reserving for the last signature the ordinance which was regarded with such eager interest. His Majesty's countenance had lost nothing of its usual calm expression, and seemed rather disposed to express satisfaction than sorrow. He gave me, as usual, without difficulty, the first signatures I asked, and took occasion to laugh at my impatience to enter Paris, as if, he said, I could not stop away two or three days more from the opera and its accompaniments. I reassured the King with respect to the ardour with which he supposed I looked forward to the opera and its surroundings, and at the same time presented the ordinance for the appointment of the Duke of Otranto. The King glanced at the paper, and let it fall on the desk; the pen slipped from his hand; the blood rushed into his face; his eyes became sorrowful, and he fell back as if struck by some fatal thought. A sorrowful silence had suddenly interrupted a conversation that was quite easy and pleasant. This silence lasted some minutes, after which the King said, with a deep sigh,—

"Come, it must be done!"

He picked up his pen, stopped again before writing the letters, and uttered these words,—

"Oh! my unhappy brother! If you see me, you have forgiven me!"

He signed at last, but in a painful and agitated manner, great tears falling from his eyes and moistening the paper. I took the ordinance, bowed, and retired. Had not respect imposed silence upon me, I should not have known how to speak, or what to say in the presence of so heartrending a spectacle. I returned the copy of the ordinance to Talleyrand, and wished to give him some information respecting the circumstances accompanying the signature; but he would not listen, and told me that he would gladly leave the sentimental to me, as it was a part in which I excelled.

Moralists, who think yourselves so able to sound the depths of the human heart, explain this in the same man. The character of Louis XVIII. is especially remarkable for perfect indifference to men and things; but in some respects it has been mistaken. This indifference with regard to the great events of his life, which were also great misfortunes, might have passed for magnanimity; and in the ordinary intercourse of life, the same indifference that preserved him from the errors of passion, and directed all the resources of his mind, might have gained for him the name of a sage and enlightened prince; and such is the judgment which, to his advantage, is generally formed of him. But how was it that, within twenty-four hours, Louis XVIII. displayed a revolting coldness towards a private misfortune, of which he was mainly, though involuntarily, the cause; while he exhibited the most natural and profound feeling when the remembrance of his unfortunate brother's execution was aroused? But it may be said this was quite another

thing: royal dignity injured, the pride of race compromised, the most horrible time of the Revolution justified, and Louis XVIII. recoiling before the writer of history, about to eternalise the memory of his cowardly weakness. No doubt some of these feelings may also have assailed him; but they would not have depressed him to the extent that I witnessed. He might have found reasons for complaint, words of opposition; his anger might have been excited even to indignation; but he would have stopped before coming to tears, while he only spoke some words mingled with his tears, all addressed to the royal martyr, with a self-abandonment that was akin to melancholy. Whenever I have found the character of Louis XVIII. in fault, I have not hesitated to avow the truth; but I will not be silent with respect to anything that does him honour, and nothing could be more honourable than the manner in which he endured the trial to which he was subjected before me. His only fault was, that he did not spurn this ordinance with indignation.

No doubt Fouché was on the road, awaiting the moment to make his appearance, for in half an hour he was at Saint Denis. He was brought thither by M. de Talleyrand, to whom, in his quality of President of Council, belonged the honour of presenting him to the King. When these gentlemen arrived, I was in a large anteroom to the King's cabinet, with M. de Châteaubriand. There was nothing in common between that illustrious man and myself but our devotion to His Majesty, and regret at the sight of what was passing before our eyes. This last feeling would not be restrained when we saw the Duke of Otranto appear, with M. de Talleyrand on his arm, and both approaching the King's cabinet with an air of calmness and security that wounded to the quick those over whom they were exulting.

I said to M. de Châteaubriand, "What we see is worthy of the pen of Tacitus; and, happily, you are present."

"Sir, you do me much honour; but, in truth, I do not know what to think of it. What does M. de Talleyrand want? A monarchy, the House of Bourbon, the happiness of France, are at stake." And M. de Châteaubriand went on in terms that I cannot allow myself to repeat.

We next learnt that M. Fouché required still some hours more to make the King's entrance into his capital as peaceable and satisfactory as could be wished. The task was not a difficult one; but it was necessary to suggest difficulties, in order that the new Minister might deserve the apparent merit of having triumphed over them, without allowing any one to suppose that these difficulties were caused solely by his own nomination. It was determined that the King should pass the night at Saint Denis, and proceed next day to the mansion of Arnouville, in the outskirts of Paris.

M. de Talleyrand there enabled the King to come to a decision with respect to the formation of the ministry. The seals were taken from Chancellor Dambray, and given to M. Pasquier; the Duke de Feltre was replaced at the War Office by Marshal Gouvion Saint-Cyr; as was I for the Navy by M. de Jaucourt; while the Home Office was reserved for M. Pozzo di Borgo. So Louis XVIII. sacrificed, without a thought, three devoted Ministers, whom he brought back from the exile to which they had followed him, at the peril of their lives and fortunes! No complaint had ever been raised against any of them, and their capacity was as well proved as that of the men preferred to them. Those by whom these changes had been demanded, did not contest any of these points; but they said that these reductions were necessary to make the cabinet homogeneous, and apparently

it was, with M. Fouché, considered the indispensable man of the ministry, that this homogeneity had to be established; and then it must be admitted that men such as MM. Dambray and De Feltre could not be too rigorously excluded.

M. de Talleyrand had discontinued his conversations with me respecting the formation of the ministry when he yielded to M. Louis' insinuations against me; and the latter did not cease to repeat before me, without any necessity, that he had nothing to do with this business, which was a secret between Talleyrand and the King. He even protested that he should be very glad if they would cast their eyes on any one but himself for the finances, because there could be none in France in the condition in which we should soon find her. I was no longer deceived by this feigned modesty, but I knew how to keep silence about it. I saw no change in the disposition of the King, who always seemed confidential to me, and I felt myself, in secret, too much hurt to ask M. de Talleyrand what he meant to do for me. However, on our arrival at Arnouville, the composition of the ministry became known, and everybody expressed their astonishment at my not being of the number; which seemed the more strange, as the King every moment showed marks of goodwill towards me. Talleyrand continued to keep silence, and maintained a prudent reserve towards me. At last he opened his mind to Laborie, for he knew very well that the secret would very soon be confided to me; but he added that if I resigned the Ministry of the Navy I should be indemnified. I was anxious to know what kind of indemnification was intended, and went at once to the King. His Majesty received me with an air of frankness, from which I augured favourably. Immediately entering on the subject, I said to the King that the formation of a ministry was publicly

known, and that I ventured to hope that my services had not ceased to be pleasing to him. He replied that I was right in thinking so, but that I no longer had the Navy, as it was given to M. de Jaucourt. I expressed my astonishment at this, on which the King resumed that he had not chosen to oppose in any way the selections of M. de Talleyrand, in order that the public might perceive from whom they emanated.

The King added, "No one knows better than you do whether I have been free; but be reassured for yourself; I give you the Post-office, with the rank and title of a Minister of State, in order to preserve to myself the right to summon you to the Council as often as I see fit. This arrangement ought to suit you; there you are secured from the vicissitudes of the ministry, and yet in a position to be of service to me. You may stay there as long as you retain my especial confidence; that is to say, a long time, or rather always."

At these last words the King held out his hand, and I bent over it with sincere and heartfelt emotion. I forgot the spectacle of the widow, whose house had time to burn down before the King troubled himself about her. I allowed myself to be most completely captivated. I left the King with remorse at having judged him too lightly; in my eyes he was nothing but the most tender-hearted and grateful of men; his image threw me into the same ecstasies as Madame de Sévigné was thrown into by that of Louis XIV., whom she thought the greatest of kings, on leaving the ball where he had done her the honour to dance with her. But I must not delay to give the antidote to this tender affection of the King for one of his servants. Some time afterwards M. de Vitrolles took the liberty to remind him that he had formally promised him the direction of the Post-office, when M. Ferrand should give it up, adding that it was unfortunate for him

that the King had not employed Count Beugnot otherwise, and in greater matters. M. de Vitrolles employed this palliative, because he was persuaded that the King had some regard for me personally. What was his astonishment to hear His Majesty reply,—

"Have patience a little while. You shall have the Post-office when I take it from Beugnot, and that will not be long."

It really was not long; but M. de Vitrolles, who had narrowly escaped the anger of Napoleon for his bold services during the Hundred Days, did not get the Post-office after me any more than he did after M. Ferrand. These little tricks are unworthy of a prince, especially when employed towards subjects, who cannot defend themselves, because they do not even dare to suspect. There is a vast distance between that and the noble sorrow that seized on Louis XVIII. when he had to appoint one of his brother's judges as his Minister. But that grief still does him honour, while these very different scenes might furnish another chapter on the eccentricities of the human mind.

At last the gate of Paris was opened to us, and I sent word to my wife to come and meet us at Arnouville, on condition that she brought us something to eat, for during this battle of the portfolios the saucepans had been neglected; we were dying of starvation, and lay on the bare boards. We celebrated this festival of our return with real joy, even though harassed by the contention of very acute feelings; the happiness of being united in the bosom of our families, after an absence that might have been a long eternal exile; the pride at seeing the triumph of the party to which we had remained faithful; the future, full of hope, connected with this triumph; the additional esteem and credit thus acquired in the world; the intriguers, the flatterers, the people who hasten to meet

you and clap their hands; and what is not so good as this, and from which, however, so few know how to abstain, the secret enjoyment found in the humiliation of those who have adopted the contrary party, and the inhuman pleasure of returning on them to-day the shafts thrown at you yesterday; such were the different feelings that rendered this dinner-party a very animated company. Then we returned to Paris, and as my weakness for the King was not chilled, I stopped at the Tuileries, and went up to his room to salute him on his arrival. The principal personages who had gone with the King to Ghent, and had shared the anxieties and weariness of his exile, the men of mark, who had considered themselves as exiles during the absence of the royal family, filled the throne-room. In the midst of them was to be found the Duke of Otranto, looking embarrassed, and, in spite of his intrigues in the Faubourg Saint Germain, beginning to experience that everybody cannot be a Minister at any price, and that it is not always enough to be one to have a court. Both doors were flung open, and the Count d'Artois was announced. The Prince entered with his easy gait, but agitated with unusual emotion. He observed the Duke of Otranto, went straight to him, took his hand, and, pressing it with the most expressive gesture, said, "Monsieur le Duc, you see me very happy, very well satisfied; the reception was admirable, and we are all obliged to you for it."

Then he cast a general look upon the Assembly, bowed gracefully, for he could not do otherwise, and passed on. Half-an-hour afterwards the King's approach was announced. A chamberlain called the Duke of Otranto, and dismissed every one, making known that the King would hold no reception in the evening because he was too tired. The old friends of the Monarchy retired in silence, leaving to Fouché alone the honour of communi-

cating that night with the descendant of Saint Louis. The Assembly had been especially petrified by the attention of Monsieur. It was to be conceived that the King might be constrained to the most cruel sacrifices by policy; but might not Monsieur have left all the discredit of the choice of Fouché to his brother? and why did he, the model of knights, possessing all their feelings as well as their manners, unnecessarily press the hand of such a man?

I returned to my house, in the Rue Royale, and found my apartments occupied by the keepers of sealed property, precursors of a confiscation. The administration of the domains had acted with an unnecessary amount of rigour, which recurred wherever any property of mine had been discovered. I complained to the director-general of that office, who had been my colleague at the Council of State, and who had remained on such terms with me as gave me reason to expect some indulgence on his part. I learned that he had done nothing but execute the very strict orders of the Duke of Gaëta, who also in this instance had not acted in accordance with his natural kindness.

When I entered my house, my wife wished to lay hands on the seals, and dispose very quickly of these vestiges of iniquity. I had much trouble in preventing her. I had to repeat to her all the reasons that I had occasion to give to General Beurnonville, while travelling, on a nearly analogous matter. The general owned two considerable farms not far from Cambrai, and sequestration had been laid on the rents of them. We were at Cambrai, and the general, who was in want of money, thinking the occasion a good one to get in his rents, sent for his tenants to reckon with them. Instead of money, they brought him the papers attesting the sequestration, and told him they would not pay till the sequestration

had been removed. Great was the disappointment, and greater still the anger of the general, who could not conceive how, on returning to France victorious over Napoleon, they should oppose him with papers which were no more value than so many rags. The tenants insisted; the general came to ask me how to proceed against these stubborn rascals. I did not share his indignation, and I explained to him, as best I could, that his tenants, not being judges of the validity of the sequestration, were in the right in requiring its removal before parting with what they owed. The general became angry, and behaved to me pretty much as he had to them. A method, however, occurred to me by which all interests might be conciliated: that was to get the King at once to proclaim an ordinance, taking off all these sequestrations, and to notify it to the tenants; but considering that the matter was one which concerned the Minister of Finance, I sent General de Beurnonville to M. Louis, who lodged in rooms near me. After some minutes I heard a frightful noise in this room, as if two men were fighting. I was running there when my door opened. The Abbé Louis dashed in, Beurnonville after him. I threw myself between them. After a mute scene of anger on their side, and astonishment on mine, I gathered at random some broken words, to the effect that the abbé would not listen to reason about the ordinance required by the general, and that he would not propose it to the King, even if he had to die on the spot. I showed both the champions that it was beneath their dignity to treat the matter so warmly, and in order to calm them I said that in General Beurnonville's place I would go to the King to complain of his Minister's obstinacy. The general thought this good, and went out to go to His Majesty. That was what I wanted. When he was gone I blamed M. Louis for having given too large a dose of his natural spitefulness.

Why should he not consent at Cambrai to a measure that he would have to adopt as soon as he got to Paris, and thoughtlessly lose the chance of serving a comrade in exile? Why instead seek an occasion to annoy him? M. Louis replied that he had always disliked General Beurnonville, as I very well knew, and that he should be less likely to relax the rule for him than for any other; but that the sequestrations had been legally imposed by Bonaparte's authority while he held the government, and that he would never consent to any decision, without previous discussion and examination, upon anything that had been done in France during the absence of the King. For himself he did not want to renew the follies of the past year. I considered these reasons plausible, and asked the Minister why he had not quietly explained them to the general.

"Why?" he answered, "because there is nothing like the obstinacy of General de Beurnonville; it is impossible to make him hear reason, when he thinks himself involved in an affair of any description. I have had too much of your generals, not to consider beforehand what may happen."

I had not left my carriage when I received a visit from all the people attached to the office of the Navy, coming for my orders. For two days my wife had given them in perfect confidence. So I had to tell her I was no longer Minister. This news was a clap of thunder for her. How, why, and by what strange chance could I have been dismissed, when before my departure no complaint had been raised against my administration? when I had followed the King into exile; when, to judge by my letters, the good will of His Majesty had kept on increasing! She wanted to know what I had done to deserve this disgrace, at the very moment when I ought to be obtaining the greatest amount of favour. I re-

peated as best I could what I have already said about the dismissal of M. de Blacas, the negotiations of M. Louis, the carelessness of Talleyrand, the weakness, or if she liked to call it so, the good will of the King towards me. None of these things would pacify her, and when I told her I was appointed Director-General of the Post-office, the tempest broke forth. She advised me, before determining on any course of conduct, to go and consult with the Chancellor, in whom she had great confidence. So I went in search of M. Dambray, whose easy and gentle temper was known to all.

All this jobbing in ministries, he told me, had been carried on entirely without any co-operation on his part. He had lost the seals, which had gone to M. Pasquier, and he considered that an undeserved disgrace. He showed me that Talleyrand had left him nothing but what he could not take away, the post of Chancellor of France; but it was well known that in taking the seals from a chancellor they struck him to the heart. He was told as a consolation that he remained president of the chamber of peers, but this office is only of value when as in England it is a necessary appendage to the first magistrate of the realm. If the two posts were separated, the Ministry of Justice would lose much of its splendour and the presidentship of its importance. As far as concerned myself, he was strongly of opinion that I should send in to the King my resignation of the general directorship of the Post. The King had, indeed, promised to appoint me a minister of state, and to summon me to the Council as he had summoned M. Ferrand, my predecessor; but matters were much changed in three months, and I should no more enter the Council as a minister of state, than he should as chancellor, at least as long as Talleyrand should remain in power, inspired by the Abbé Louis. But he insisted that I should give such an ex-

planation of my resignation as would in no way injure my prospects for the future; for, added he in a confident tone, and with one of those bursts of mirth not rare with him, this fine ministry of Talleyrand's *will not for ever last*, and he sang the chorus again.

I left M. Dambray reflecting on his advice. And yet I said to myself that he had not lost the friendship or private confidence of the King, that it was very likely that his Majesty had not concealed from him the constraint exercised on him in the formation of this new ministry, nor the hope he preserved *in petto* to get rid of them shortly.

The Chancellor revealed enough when he sung to me, *will not for ever last.* That was another reason for sending in my resignation to the King. I drove to the Tuileries, and stayed in the garden to prepare the theme of my conversation with His Majesty. I have often had occasion to prepare in that manner what I had to say when summoned to a conversation on some point of importance, and it has seldom been successful. The matter is easily arranged by a man who is completely master of it, and nothing is easier than to answer any questions asked; but when in conversation with a person who is not in the secret of your preparation, an unexpected speech or word or gesture on his part throws you off the ground on which you had planted yourself, the endeavours you make to regain it remove you still farther from it, and you fall into weakness and confusion by the very means taken to avoid them. If this is true, as respects myself, when I have to converse with any private individual, it is still more so when I have to engage in a private conversation with a king, whose very name appeals so loudly to the imagination of most men, and above all with Louis XVIII., who enhanced this first illusion with all that a graceful and dignified bearing could

add to it. Happy are those who are endowed by nature with that activity of mind which brings forth ideas at will, who know how to clothe them in all possible forms, and who, by their familiarity with the usages of the world, are enabled to select the best. They have no need for preparation; but I contend that it is injurious even to those who, like me, have none of these advantages in their favour. It is still preferable to confine oneself to reflection on the subject which is to be discussed, and to leave the mind quite at liberty; then one is less embarrassed by the unexpected turns of conversation, and better able to defend himself. The conversation I held that day with Louis XVIII. confirmed the truth of the observation.

When I presented myself in the royal apartments, Talleyrand was with the King, and I again had leisure for a full hour to scrutinize my useless preparation. At last I was introduced. I expected to take the initiative, and I had so arranged the terms of my address that it should be at once respectful and insinuating. Unfortunately the King addressed me first, and thus was my exordium thrust aside. I therefore renounced it, and proposed to enter more simply into the business, when the King drove the directorship of the Post-office, my resignation, my vanities, and my calculations, a thousand miles off, by a complaint, in a very grievous tone, of the conduct of the foreign troops at Paris and in his own palace.

The King said to me, "You have just witnessed it. A bivouac in my court of the Tuileries, and cannon are pointed on the Pont Royal. With whom are they angry? I can never fancy the sovereigns have authorised such a . . . ."

And with these words the King rested his elbows on his desk, and hid his face in his hands. He must have

been affected to the utmost degree to give way to this expression of sorrow in my presence. I endeavoured to find words in which I might express my feelings in circumstances of such a painful nature. But I was only able to murmur some words of indignation, while I assured the King of my affection, which could only be increased by these savage proceedings. The King asked me whether I still required any signature from him, and dismissed me on my answer in the negative. When I left His Majesty's cabinet I had no reason for regretting my silence. A bolder man, I said to myself, would have acted in the same manner. I remembered that once before in my life, before going to Lille, and in the very same place, I had come with complaints of my wounded vanity, to weary the Emperor, already face to face with misfortune. I had often reproached myself for this mistaken act of selfishness. Was I to repeat it with the King, in a position novel to a son of Louis XIV., returning to his capital with the humiliation of seeing it for the second time invaded by foreigners?

I cannot without pity hear or read in a hundred places, that twice running, in 1814 and 1815, the house of Bourbon was brought back to us by foreigners. I have before had occasion to point out in the least equivocal manner, that is by facts, that while the first time the sovereigns of Europe did not oppose the restoration, they did nothing to promote it, and that far from wishing for it they rather raised doubts of its success. The second time, that is to say in 1815, the King left the city of Ghent without having consulted them, advanced quickly to Paris, and entered it to the great surprise of the foreign troops, who had taken possession of the capital and its neighbourhood, and fully intended to revenge themselves for their foolish indulgence the year before. The disappointment caused by his appearance was very

great at the head-quarters of the Prussians, the first comers. They decided not to pay the least attention to the King's return, and to act as if he had been still at Ghent.

It was evidently with the intention of executing this design that the cannon were pointed at the Pont Royal, just in front of the Tuileries, and that the gunners stood sentry over the pieces with lighted matches, while Prussian soldiers washed their clothes in the palace yard, and hung them up to dry on the points of the railings. I learnt these particulars from Count de Golty, Prussian minister in France, with whom I had become particularly intimate at Ghent, and who, while a perfectly good Prussian at heart, always regretted such revolting proceedings, but he blamed the King for having exposed himself to them, by neglecting to make arrangements with the sovereigns respecting the period and manner of his return.

"You wanted," he said, "to go all alone, without having any troops of your own or asking us for ours. You see what has happened. And it is not to be regretted that the King has felt it."

So far was the royal family forced on us the second time by foreigners, in 1815.

I had to present to M. de Talleyrand, in his quality of President of Council, the ordinances to which I had obtained the King's signature at Ghent, and during his return journey. I waited on him for that purpose. He received me as usual, with the pleasant familiarity with which he meets those whom he regards as of his own party, but I saw that he really was feeling sorrow. After some details on the subject of my visit, he expressed to me the pleasure with which he received it. He had a little more business to do, and asked me to stay and help him. Among this business he placed quite naturally the

order for the organisation of the new Ministry, and insisted that the same order should contain the appointment to the general directorship of the Post-office and of the Bridges and Roads, for these two places naturally form part of the cabinet. He added that I must also prepare some lines to announce the arrival of the King in Paris. He asked that it should be short. While he considered it necessary to mark the independence with which the King had quitted Belgium, advanced to Paris, and entered it, he thought that all appearance of boastfulness or pride ought to be avoided, as that was the rock of danger. He asked me to go into his library. As I had not given in my resignation, I had nothing better left to do than not to change my relations with Talleyrand, and to seem to agree with him in thinking that the general direction of the Post-office was an office that placed me very near the Ministry. I hoped that the title of minister of state would induce me to take the last step, and in this hope I ought rather to seek to make myself useful than to stand apart and sulk at leisure. I went into the library, and when in an hour's time I returned to Prince de Talleyrand's room with my papers I found him surrounded by four persons, who were strongly maintaining against him that the Prussians were making preparations to blow up the bridge of Jena.

In reply to their testimony Talleyrand said,

"It is not true; and I tell you it is not true, because it is not true."

He was with difficulty persuaded to send some trustworthy person to the place, to tell him what he saw. His secretary went, with the Marquis de Giambonne. While Talleyrand and I remained *tête-à-tête*, with lengthened faces, and in that anxious silence which always accompanies the expectation of any important event, the doors opened, and M. Louis was announced. M. Louis ad-

vanced, followed by a handsome young man, of elegant figure, and said to the prince,

"I have the honour of presenting M. Decazes to you."

M. de Talleyrand, without rising from his seat, which he cannot do without difficulty, coldly bowed, and said he did not know him.

M. Louis resumed, "It is M. Decazes, councillor at the royal court, who has presided with so much success at the assizes."

"I am delighted to hear it," replied M. de Talleyrand; "but, M. Louis, we are much engaged, and I have not a moment to give you."

The presented and the presentor retired together.

Then Talleyrand said to me, "Can you imagine Louis bringing me, I do not in the least know why, a man whom I do not know at all? What is his man's name?"

"M. Decazes."

"What is M. Decazes? Do you know him, Beugnot?"

"I had never seen him, but I have heard him mentioned as a man who was intimate with Bonaparte's mother, and the Queen of Holland. He is well looking."

"I do not know whether he is good or bad looking, I did not look at him."

Such was the introduction of M. Decazes into the ancient higher circle. M. Louis presented him to Talleyrand, with no more precaution; and what would be more amusing, if a smile might be bestowed on a commencement that had such serious results, it was on Talleyrand's recommendation that two days after the scene I have just related, M. Decazes was appointed Prefect of Police, and in a short time became powerful enough to get Talleyrand banished from the court of Louis XVIII.

Some moments after the withdrawal of M. Louis, the

messengers sent to inquire about the bridge of Jena came back with the information that it was really attacked by the Prussian sappers, but that happily they were performing their task very ill. These gentlemen had found a French engineer officer on the spot, and he told them that in the way the Prussians went about it they would be some time in blowing up the bridge, but that if he had the charge of the operation, it would have been done already. What was to be done? Something must be settled quickly. The especial anger of the Prussians was apparently excited by the name it bore. So the name should be changed instantly, information of the change sent them, and an endeavour made to appease their resentment, which would henceforth be without an object. I took the pen and drew up an ordinance, in the preamble of which I announced that it was the King's intention to restore their real names to the ancient buildings of the capital, and to give to the new ones such as should recall only periods of reconciliation and peace, or their especial value to the capital; and applying the measure generally, I changed the names of the Ponts de la Concorde, de l'Empire, Jena, and Austerlitz, and gave them the names of Pont Royal, de Louis XVI., des Invalides, and du Jardin du Roi. Lastly, I directed that the bridges, squares, and public edifices of the city of Paris should resume the names they bore on the 1st of January, 1790, and that all other inscriptions should be erased. Talleyrand was instantly to carry this order to the King. That was not the most difficult thing to do. It had then to be notified to Marshal Blücher, in the most suitable terms, and he had to be approached in a cool moment, to give it effect. The success of the mission affected the national honour so much that it was perhaps not beneath M. de Talleyrand himself. The prince, without expressing any intention, went

to the Tuileries, and soon brought back the ordinance, with its signature; but he was but little inclined to undertake what still remained, and proposed that I should go to Marshal Blücher. I refused myself, observing that I was unqualified to perform such an important office, which naturally belonged to the Minister of the Interior, or at least to the Prefect of the Seine.

"Now," replied Talleyrand, sharply, "do go; while we lose time in going backwards and forwards, and disputes about competency, the bridge will be blown up. Announce yourself as coming from the King of France, and as his minister; say the strongest things you can about his vexation."

"Shall I say that the King will station himself on the bridge in his own proper person, and be blown up with it, if the marshal does not give way?"

"No, not exactly; they do not think we are capable of such heroism; but something good and strong; you understand—something strong."

I hastened to the marshal's house. He was not there, but I found the officers of his staff all together. I was announced as coming from the King of France; I was received with respect and politeness; I explained the object of my mission to the officer whom I supposed to be chief of the staff. He replied by regretting the marshal's absence, and excused himself by want of power to give orders without having received any from him. As I persisted, they went to fetch the marshal, being sure of finding him in the place he especially delighted in, No. 113, Palais Royal. He came with his natural ill-humour increased by the vexation he experienced at having been disturbed in his game at trente-et-un. He heard me impatiently, as if he hardly understood me, and answered in such a way that I did not understand at all. The chief of the staff took up the conversation with him in German. It

lasted some time, and I understood enough of the language to see that the marshal violently rejected the very reasonable observations made by that officer. At last he told me that the marshal had given no orders for the destruction of the bridge, though I might suppose how much the name irritated the Prussian soldiers; but from the moment that the King of France had himself abolished the name, he had no doubt that the enterprise commenced against the bridge would instantly cease, and that an order to that effect would be given. I begged his permission to wait till the order had gone, that I might be able to completely re-assure His Majesty. He consented. The marshal very speedily returned to his dear No. 113. The order was really despatched. I followed the officer to the spot, and when I saw that the workmen had stopped, and were going away with their tools, I went to M. de Talleyrand to inform him of this mournful victory, which in some measure restored his good humour.

"As matters have gone thus," said the prince, "something may be made of your notion this morning, that the King had thought of standing on the bridge to be blown up along with it. There is matter in it for a good leading article. Manage this."

I did so, and the article appeared in the next day's papers. Louis XVIII. must have been much frightened at such an inspiration for himself; but afterwards he accepted the credit of it with pleasure. I have heard compliments paid him on this admirable manifestation of courage, and he replied with perfect assurance.

CHAPTER XII.

Appointed Postmaster-General—Projects for the Amelioration of the Postal Service—Abuse of the System of Franking—Abolition of Ancient Distinctions—My Reforms opposed by the Duc d'Orléans—*Malles* and *Courriers*—Opposition of the Abbé Louis—Pretensions of Foreign Powers—The King's Dissatisfaction with Talleyrand and Fouché—Creation of Peers—Difficulties with the Princesse d'Angoulême—Madame de Serent—Fall of the Talleyrand Ministry—Dismissed from my Post.

As I had consented to accept the office of Director-General of the Post, the best thing that I could do was to devote myself entirely to that humble employment, and to vindicate that reputation as an administrator which M. Louis was pleased to give me. The administration of the Post consists, like that of almost all other offices, of receipts and expenditure. I found the more difficulty in it, as the forms of accounts were very imperfect, and the two invasions of 1814 and 1815 had introduced great confusion into the public service, especially the Post. I was particularly struck by the number of franks, diminishing the receipts considerably. It was impossible to estimate the extent of this power of franking attached to certain dignities, and to great offices of state. It might be calculated to a certain extent, if the franks were limited to letters or parcels really addressed to any particular dignitary or man in office; but the extent to which his signature was used and abused by his relations and friends, as well as those of his secretary and his household, was in general scandalous.

Once, when M. de Choiseul was Minister, a packet was

stopped in the post, addressed to Vienna, under the cover of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, with a nice pair of slippers in it, which a subordinate in one of the offices, who had lived in the capital of Austria, was sending to a female friend he had left there. The administration took on themselves to open the packet, and the pair of slippers was brought to daylight. The scandal seemed so great, that the Minister was informed of it, and Jannel, who did the secret work of the post with Louis XV., and whose presence it was supposed might have some weight with the Minister, was deputed to the Duke de Choiseul. Jannel presented himself, explained the scandal which he had come to denounce, and displayed the proof before him. M. de Choiseul listened, looked, and said to the envoy, enhancing the haughty tone natural to him—

"I consider you, sir, very insolent to come into my cabinet, to boast of the most serious violence your administration could make itself guilty of. You found nothing in the packet that my signature should have kept inviolate but a pair of slippers; who told you that the slippers did not contain a state secret? Go this moment into my office, and have the seal you have taken the liberty to break replaced, and let the packet be sent off. That is all you have to do. I am willing to forgive you this time."

This Jannel is said to have been a modest man, who humiliated himself designedly, as others inflate themselves, through vanity. He entered by a secret staircase, even into the cabinet of Louis XV., to whom he thus brought the correspondence of the Count de Broglie, that is to say, the counterpart of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Duke de Choiseul knew him, and in this little matter of the slippers he had given way, as he often did in weightier matters, to his natural haughtiness, without

taking much thought of the consequences. Jannel failed not to carry his complaint very humbly and discreetly to Louis XV., but the King did not take fire, and with that moderation of judgment which was natural to him, his Majesty said—

"There is no fault here on either side. You did your business; Choiseul did his."

It may indeed be believed that, after this adventure, they discontinued sending slippers under cover of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the officials of the Post-office did not think it advisable to break the seal of the Minister again; on both sides abuses necessarily disappeared. I had this anecdote from a friend of my father, M. de Rivière, Chief Clerk of the King's Household, who had himself been very intimate with M. Jannel.

The lesson had been forgotten, and slippers were circulated in great numbers on all the routes when I took the direction of the Post Office. I inquired the reason of the immense number of franks that M. Ferrand had granted or acknowledged, and I raised a violent storm against myself. I have been in office more than thirty years, and I am still lost in amazement as to the means by which the Constituent Assembly, and still more the Convention, managed to extirpate from the soil of France the privileges and distinctions which, as it were, had sunk deep into it. Public burdens had for ages pressed on the lower classes of society; they were the sign by which the conquered people were recognised. The words *taille*, *taillon*, *corvée*, and *servage*,* seemed to perpetuate the humiliation of defeat. As much from pride as from self-interest, all means of escape from these burdens were attempted—to be clothed, to be assessed, to be summoned to arms like the multitude,

* Villein tax, ancient tax, forced labour, serfage.

seemed a punishment when some privileges were in reach. This explains how the Government was able, in the creation of burdens, to transcend even the limits of the ridiculous, to make inspectors of sea fish and salt fish, king's councillors; examiners of pigs' tongues,* ship breakers, tasters of fresh butter, &c., royal councillors. Very honest men gave their money to be adorned with these pompous titles; they were paid an interest below what they might have got in a reasonable investment, for the capital they advanced, but the title of king's royal councillor raised them above their fellows; such titles were not bestowed on every one. His Majesty, in the extent of his kingdom, had not less than twenty thousand councillors, of all cloths and capacities, and it was something to be raised above the crowd, and reach this illustrious class. Even to-day, when revolutions, following closely on each other, have swept again and again over the surface of society, what sentiment still exists in hearts in which so many other feelings have passed away? The passion for equality that must be defined, in order to avoid the appearance of falling into a singular contradiction, by attributing to the same people, though at different times, an extreme love of privileges, and the passion for equality. This equality, our dominant passion at present, is not the noble and amiable feeling that makes persons love honour themselves, and in their fellow-creatures, and enables them to feel at ease in all ranks of social order; no, it is the aversion for anything superior, and fear lest the place that we occupy may cease to be the first. This equality does not tend in any way to elevate to itself that which approaches it from below, but to prevent anything rising higher. It is nothing more than a vast privilege, a monopoly that has replaced all others. A man will now show himself furious in defence

* Perhaps like the Irish measle-triers.

of his equality, who, if he had lived a hundred years ago, would have honestly acquired an office of inspector of pigs' tongues, or taster of fresh butter. It is the love of privilege, which is the same to-day as it was then.

But franking letters had always been the especial privilege; there was about it something royal, or, at least, ministerial; it was a convenient appendage to power, and so it was claimed on all sides. Even now it seems to me that I took a wise step. Before the revolution, the franking of letters had been regulated by an order of the Council of 1778, and afterwards by an Imperial decree. I applied the first of these regulations to the ancient dignities which reappeared along with the King, and the second to those that had been preserved from the Imperial rule. And yet I gave satisfaction to no one, because those who had the right of franking, tried to extend it beyond all bounds, and to free it from conditions that had been imposed to prevent abuse, and those who only possessed it through the munificence of M. Ferrand, defended it as an acquired right, that a director-general had a full power to give them, but that another director-general certainly had not power to recall. So I had to strive against the court, the military chiefs, and the principal magistrates. This was more than was wanted to weary and depress me. The House of Orléans was at the head of my assailants. I certainly raised no doubts as to the right of this illustrious house, but I resisted as much as possible any extensions of their claim. I argued these difficulties with M. de Broval, *Secrétaire des Commandements* of the Duke of Orléans, a man of fretful spirit, and with whom discussion was not at all times agreeable. With the Duchess Dowager I found a still less agreeable man, a M. de ——, who urged his views with obstinacy, and thought that nothing which was allowed to the princess could be refused to him.

The House of Orléans was identified with the Revolution; from the very first it had proclaimed its principles, mounted its colours, and defended its conquests. It was natural to expect, therefore, that on its return to France, it would set an example of submission to those new principles that had prevailed so far that the Restoration itself was obliged to consecrate them, such, for example, as the principle of the equal division of taxation among all the citizens. It appeared quite impossible, however, to make the Dowager Duchess, and especially the Duke of Orléans, understand this. They seemed to think that it was inconsistent with their dignity thus to place themselves under the common law, and were scandalized at the persistence of the Finance Minister on this point. During the first period of the Restoration, this matter remained undecided, in consequence of the tenacity of the Abbé Louis, on the one hand, and the interested pride of the House of Orléans on the other. Then came the events of the Hundred Days, and the dispute was necessarily deferred for a time. It reappeared on our return; but the rough champion of the equality of division left the Exchequer, and was replaced by M. Corvetto. The strife was too much for the temperament of the new Minister. He sought in all directions for some means by which he might avoid the difficulty, and at last adopted the following. The arrears of taxes of the House of Orléans were covered by the application of an equal sum taken from the *fonds de non-valeurs*—a fund destined, as is well known, for the assistance of the poorest tax-payers, and of those who, during the course of the year, have suffered loss by accident, or by unfavourable seasons. It was not easy to place the very wealthy House of Orléans in either of these categories; and besides, the example was contagious. Some persons about the court took advantage of it to solicit

the same favour, and it was not difficult for them to prove that, with respect to fortune, they were in a worse condition than the first prince of the blood. The Minister who had been so unfortunate as to yield to one, could not refuse the others, and more than once have I deplored this error in the conduct of M. Corvetto. I have reason to think that he was encouraged by Louis XVIII. an extenuation, though no excuse, for his fault; the King not thinking it right that his relations should appear in the list of direct taxes, which he persisted in calling the roll of the villein-tax.

For my part, I acknowledged the right of franking in those to whom it was allowed by the two regulations cited above, and refused it to all others; but I had only one means of enforcing the payment of the postage on letters; it was to refuse to give them to those who would not previously pay for them. Here the difficulty became serious, and cries and complaints assailed me from all sides. It was said that, in arbitrarily retaining the letters, I had both impeded business and wounded affection. Births, deaths, and marriages, and, what was worse, invitations to balls, remained unknown, when they had been entrusted to the post with the view of securing publicity; and on this canvas were embroidered stories of many a *qui pro quo* to which they gave a serious or a comic turn, as it pleased them. Complaints were made elsewhere of delay in the arrival of Treasury warrants and even commercial bills falling due at certain dates. I was invariably considered responsible for all this, and was even threatened with an action for damages. I was described to the King and Princes as a troublesome, difficult person, against whom there was a general outcry, an empty phrase that never misses its aim, because no one thinks of making any particular inquiry, unless it be that they understand by these words that crowd of

scamps, or people grown fat on abuses, who really cry aloud when an attempt is made to touch them. I hoped for assistance and support from the Minister of Finance, as my office, so far as its proceeds were concerned, was under his jurisdiction. He failed me, however, this time; his inflexibility had reason for its exercise elsewhere. By a singular chance he spoke to me in a tone of moderation and almost amiability, saying:—

"Do you know that you are causing a greater outcry against yourself alone than all the other directors-general together? These Court people deafen us about you from morning to night. I am afraid you are going too fast. The revenue must be maintained, but without causing irritation."

I replied, "Nothing could be so wise; but be kind enough to tell me how to keep up the revenue, and at the same time to permit persons who have no reasonable title to such a privilege, to arrogate to themselves the power of franking letters? Beside them, behind them, after them, why not others? What is to become of us if rich and accredited persons about the King will not submit to any of the public burdens, except such as suit them? At that game, we might as well go back where we came from, and you know that our residence there was not pleasant. However, we can easily come to an agreement; propose to the King to make an order, or do it yourself in two lines, directing that the privilege of franking letters be provisionally continued to those to whom it was granted or recognised by the last director-general of the Post-office, without, however, allowing persons of the same rank or quality, who have not hitherto enjoyed it, to avail themselves of it. Assuredly, that will not avail much, but, at any rate, the mischief will be put a stop to, until it can be extirpated."

The Abbé Louis replied that he would not propose

such a measure to the King for anything in the world, and, for still weightier reasons, would not take it on himself, adding that I must get myself out of the difficulty by my own exertions. Weary of the contest, I took the step of having the letters delivered to their address, keeping an exact account of what was the postage of these letters, with the view of recovering it, if that should ever be possible. I knew very well that it was a bad billet that I had got hold of then; but I could not endanger invitations to ball or dinner any longer by my obstinacy, or notes conveying information of events that occupy the persons addressed for one or two minutes, if they are very near relations, or even intimate friends of those who think proper to be married, to have their infants baptized, or to get themselves buried.

I have gone into some detail about this disturbance to show how difficult it was for measures of order to be restored at this time. The men whom the King brought back with him, quite honourable in all other respects, had not been able, while emigrants, to conceive a proper notion of the changes wrought in our public law and in our morals in a quarter of a century. With the most undoubting faith, they saw in Louis XVIII. only a King in whom Louis XV. and Louis XVI. were continued. Any attempt to convert them was an offence which seemed to profane the shrine of fidelity. They could not be brought to see the consequences which necessarily flowed from the principle of equality of taxation; and how quickly should they have disabused themselves on this subject, seeing that they had amongst them, or, to speak more accurately, at their head, the Duke of Orléans, whose father had made this principle ring so loud in the instructions to the deputies of the year 1789?

Having thus glanced at the revenue of the Post-office, I endeavoured to discover how the expenditure was

carried on, and here, too, abuses sprang into view. The mails were carried in heavy vehicles, clumsy, and of a design unchanged, perhaps, since the establishment of the post in France. Whatever were the shapes of the *boxes* called mails, they generally were much larger than necessary for the letters and the guard they had to carry. The remainder was filled on each line of road by the most famous productions of the country traversed, which the guard took charge of for conveyance to the capital, either on commission or as traffic on his own account. It may be supposed how valuable was this speedy mode of transport for provisions, and especially for articles that were liable to deteriorate quickly. Thus the mail rendered a double service, that of the King and that of the courier, and I cannot say which was most burdensome to them. The post of courier became an excellent one, and was in singular demand. Besides the list of foot-couriers, there was one of candidates for the post, and a place even upon this second list was of sufficient importance for persons of influence at Court, even the princesses themselves, to beg for their protégés. These couriers form almost a distinct species. They are almost all strong, active men, in excellent health, and far from being exhausted by continual motion, they derive from it an accession of life. I have tried to account for this, and have remarked that the courier has but little occasion for any intellectual exertion, a circumstance which contributes in no small degree to his good health, and even real happiness. The gastric system in him holds the first place, and as his physical powers are increased by continual exercise, he drinks, he eats, and sleeps better than any one else. He has no communication with his kind, but in the way of kindness; he has a thousand chances of obliging, not one of doing harm. He is the bearer of good news; and when

they are bad, he consoles. Many go to meet him, he goes to meet no one. No spring mornings, no fine autumn nights are missed by him; and if, in addition to all this, he makes his fortune in a life of such completeness, there is no reason for surprise that such a situation should find a large number of candidates.

I plainly saw that this old post machine must be altered: *nova sint omnia.* The first change to be effected was, no doubt, to replace these miserable mails, the like of which was to be found nowhere else, by lighter vehicles, with springs, and more suitable for their purpose. Then I thought it possible, in spite of all the objections with which I was harassed, to make the postal service daily, and to arrange the hours of starting everywhere according to the requirements of commerce. A memorial had been sent to me with a proposition to extend the postal service even into the villages; but I found that this would cause a considerable increase of expense, which would not be covered by an equal revenue, and I could not tell whether under the circumstances of the moment the measure would be one of sound financial policy.

I also proposed to reduce the three offices that received and even embezzled the revenues of the Post at Paris, to one office with the necessary subdivisions, and to place this office in its true position, that is to say, in the Treasury; for as in the rest of France the directors of the Post passed the receipts of their offices to the local receivers of finance, there was no reason to adopt a different course in the capital. I would have pursued this idea so far as to have at Paris a director of the Post, who should be nothing more than those of Lyons, Strasbourg, or Bordeaux. Then there would have been general uniformity in the administration, which would proceed harmoniously over the whole of France. It

would have been requisite to establish a general control over the whole, and a higher power that should be employed under the authority of the Minister of Finance in carrying out improvements suggested by experience in correcting the tariffs, when they admitted of it, and in restricting general expense. I proposed for that purpose to create four Controllers-General of Posts and a Superintendent. The kingdom should be divided into four districts, each of which should be inspected by one of the four Controllers every year, to check the details of the postal service and of the relays; the Superintendent to be at the head of the administration. This superior committee would have been entirely separate from the directors. I thought I could see a return to order in such an organisation, and the means of perfecting one of the most important branches of the public service.

These reforms had the misfortune of not pleasing the Abbé Louis; he opposed my projects with plausible reasons. He said that it was not an opportune moment to make such notable changes in any part of the administration; that the first thing to be done was to get rid of the rest of Europe from among us, and to repair the ravages their armies had committed; then, as soon as we were free on that side, and peace reigning within, the opportunity might be taken to make the administration perfect; till then, the machine must be made to go as it was—as best it could. The Minister persuaded me to defer my projects, and proposed to me a better manner of employing the time I had to spare—in assisting him in a mission he had just received to negotiate with the ministers of the foreign Powers in the interest of France.

Prince Talleyrand had indeed obtained his appointment to this delicate office, concurrently with the Marquis de Jaucourt, Minister of Marine. I urged my incapacity

for an office so important, and I could not restrain the expression of my astonishment at his having accepted a mission for which he seemed to me but little prepared by his antecedents, and to which his character did not much incline him. "Talleyrand wished it," was the reply to all my objections; and it was hard to find a better. I profited by the opportunity to cast a glance over the first notes sent by the foreign ministers, containing the summary of the pretensions of the Powers. I was alarmed and humiliated at them, and I did not envy the Abbé Louis the honour of a contest with the anger of the stronger party, for the violence of which there was no excuse. The foreign Powers had acknowledged at Vienna, and proclaimed, on the termination of the Congress, that France was not to blame for the events of the Hundred Days, which were to be imputed only to Bonaparte, and to the revolt he had stirred up in the French army. And in consequence of this admission the Powers had declared that they came to the aid of France, and its King, their ally; and that object gained, when Napoleon was driven away to St. Helena, when the revolted army had been disbanded, the Powers expressed their indignation against France, when before Waterloo they had declared that she was not to blame, and, in the presence of the King whose declared allies they were, they roused themselves to ruin and dismember his kingdom. So true it is that among nations reason and justice are only words, and public right a game. The public announcement of declarations, and all the secrets of the intrigues, can only sometimes throw a veil over this terrible truth, that nations always remain in their relations to each other in that state of nature in which brute force is the highest law. How right was old Brennus' *Væ victis!* And here there was no difference between those who had taken different sides: in the eyes

of foreigners, every Frenchman, beginning with the King, was vanquished.

I was astonished that Prince de Talleyrand placed the negotiation of such interests in other hands than his own. The ministers who had followed their sovereigns to Paris were the same, over whom he had exercised so much influence at the Congress of Vienna; he it was who, on the news of the Emperor's return, had stirred up and in some sort organised the resistance of the whole of Europe. Now that the event of the war had justified his prudent efforts, no one was better prepared than he was to settle the amount of indemnity owed by France, if any were due, to the great European family. The Abbé Louis had truly told me that the negotiation had been entrusted to him, but that nothing would be determined without the consent of Talleyrand, who, as chief of the Council, necessarily remained in the background. This explanation was one of those to which there is no reply. Talleyrand might have negotiated in the month of August, 1815, with Metternich, Nesselrode, and Castlereagh, as he had done six months before. The final approbation of Talleyrand was a matter of course, as President of the Council; but that was not the essential point: the rejection or approval of the negotiation in a great measure depended on the skill with which it should be conducted. That is the sphere in which the talent of M. de Talleyrand is so advantageously employed, and for which there is not a man in France less adapted than the Abbé Louis. It was evident that in this matter there was some secret motive which they were endeavouring to conceal. I had more than once had occasion to speak to M. de Talleyrand of his influence over the Emperor of Russia, and of the advantage that, in the cruel circumstances in which we were placed, might be derived from it. He only replied to me rather

enigmatically on this head. One day, among others, I expressed to him my desire to meet the Emperor, and I asked him if there would be any indiscretion on my part in presenting myself any day when His Majesty might do him the favour to dine with him. Talleyrand told me that he was going to dine with the Emperor that very day, but he thought that this Prince never went to dine with anyone. From these data I concluded that matters between the Emperor of all the Russias and his Highness of the Rue Saint Florentin were not on the same footing as they were the year before. My conversations with the King confirmed me in this notion.

I still enjoyed the honour of private work with His Majesty, and the purpose was determined by himself. I was to receive tidings of events from the directors of the Posts, and even of the reports circulated in every town in France. The notice was to be short, containing its report in a few unpretentious lines. I prepared a kind of synoptical table, which I sent daily to His Majesty. I attended every Tuesday and Friday, at nine o'clock in the morning, to take the King's orders. I could even attend on other days, if there was any important news to announce. This manner of controlling his Ministry by a secret agency was borrowed by the King from the policy of his grandfather. His Majesty delighted in it, and ordered me to give my special attention to this correspondence. One day he said to me, "I attach the greater value to it because I observe a great difference between it and what comes to me from any other source, and especially from the reports of the Minister of the General Police."

In these interviews I ventured to risk some observations respecting that Minister, but at first he only followed me timidly in the road I endeavoured to open before him. He did not repulse me, however, and that

was something gained. Sometime afterwards, on the occasion of Fouché's famous report, the publication of which I was the first to announce to him, he revealed his opinion respecting that person.

"I was wrong," he said, "to call such a man to my Council. I saw it at the second interview. You know better than anyone whose doing it was."

And as if the King had felt that he had gone rather too far, he left me no time for reply, passing to another subject; but he had said enough to make me think that he was much dissatisfied with the Ministry of the General Police, and as little pleased with M. de Talleyranp, that is to say, with all the others. I concluded from this that if M. de Talleyrand had ceased to be on good terms with the Emperor of Russia, and had not begun to be in favour with the King, his Ministry would not last long.

The times were indeed difficult; it was necessary to be master of events. No less important a task had to be accomplished than the organisation of the Chamber of Peers, which was still only a shadow, and the assembly of a good Chamber of Deputies, of which all trace had long been lost. It was above all important to lay the foundations of the real Ministry of a representative Government, with all the conditions which were indispensable to it. All this was attempted. and in a very short time. It is true, that our goodwill was not always crowned with success. For instance, the elections to the Chamber of Deputies, for which preparations had been made with remarkably little foresight, resulted in a hostile majority against Talleyrand. The establishment of a real Ministry, under a representative Government, did not prevent Fouché from writing, publishing, and acting on his own account, without giving himself much concern as to what was said of it elsewhere. Talleyrand did as

much on his side, but with a discretion and politeness of which the other was ignorant. The truth about that Ministry was, that Talleyrand alone composed it; the colleagues he had chosen only existed during his life, and did not survive him a minute.

Talleyrand thought he would get the better of the situation by one of those numerous creations of peers that assure a factitious majority to the Cabinet, and are not the least in accordance with the real opinion of the country. The signature of the ordinance, to believe Talleyrand, was a very gay scene of comedy.

"What!" said the King to him, "do you insist, you, M. de Talleyrand, that we should create all those people peers—hereditary peers? For instance, M. —— and M. —— hereditary peers? Truly this is beyond bounds!"

"Yes, sire," coolly replied M. de Talleyrand; "it is especially for those peers and their like that I demand the dignity to be hereditary."

"Let me look at your list again," said the King.

Talleyrand presented it; the King read it, and returned it to the Minister, adding—

"At least, everything should be in its right place. I find in it M. Cornudet before M. Cornet; and yet it seems to me that as Cornudet is only a diminutive of Cornet, the latter should go first."

"His Majesty's observation is very just," said M. de Talleyrand; and he took the list with the greatest coolness, and corrected it in accordance with the observation; and His Majesty signed it.

It was with this pleasant jocularity, and this little feast of wit, between two men who both had it in plenty, that what was, perhaps, the most important resolution of the reign of Louis XVIII. was decided.

This peculiar point in the character of Louis XVIII.

must be noticed. At the time that he consented to everything Talleyrand proposed to him, he felt no inward confidence in him. He even hated him personally, and would have been very glad to be rid of him; but as long as he kept him as Minister he allowed him to govern after his own fashion, while it must always be remembered that, the day after his fall, he gave him over to the ridicule of the courtiers, and encouraged them by gesture and voice.

I could easily have got myself included in this first nomination of peers; but I did not do so, and was wrong. At that time the peerage was very far from having soared to that height which it has since attained. It was then nothing more than a continuation of the Senate, a kind of retreat where those who had filled high places might find repose when desirous of quitting them. For this reason, and also remembering the Senate, the peerage was not supposed to be compatible with the office of prefect, counsellor of state, or director-general; and, as it seemed with good reason, I gave the preference to the general direction of the Post, as offering advantages of more than one kind, and the inappreciable privilege of working directly with the King, without any responsibility. It is true that I was still under the charm of my novel position. Considered in its administrative light, the direction of the Post-office took up little of my time, as I was condemned to allow it to continue in its old tracks; so there remained my private relations with the King, no less confidential than when I was Police Minister. But the jealousy I excited soon became a storm, which was destined to overthrow me; and in order to explain the causes of it I must resume the narrative of events a little earlier.

The tendency of my opinions has been seen. A great deal of management must have been required to regulate

my conduct by them, and not to be in very bad odour at the court of the Count of Artois, in which I include the Duchess of Angoulême. Now, on this point all my usual skill abandoned me. I had the misfortune to alienate that princess by opposing her, without either explaining my motives or soliciting forgiveness. One of her chief officers, considered an honest man, came to me one day with a proposition that seemed to me more than misplaced. I replied that he certainly could not be aware of the object of the proposal which he laid before me, for otherwise he would never have undertaken it; and I gave some explanations. The messenger was neither confused nor shaken. He repeated his proposal, adding that I might conclude it did not emanate from himself. I pretended not to understand him, and replied that, as I supposed he had no relations except with respectable persons, those persons must, like him, have been led into error. At last he asked me if he must take back an absolute refusal on my part to those who sent him; I repeated, "Most absolute." He had not told me in so many words that he came from the Duchess of Angoulême, and I had taken good care not to press him on that point. I thought rightly that I could not speak to the princess of such a business without failing in respect, and that I ought rather to compel myself to believe that she knew nothing of it, and keep silence. Next Sunday after mass I passed before her in my turn; she received my salute coldly; but as the princess had not spoiled me in that respect, I could not hastily conclude that she at all resented the last week's business.

A short time afterwards I again found myself in opposition to the princess; and if I was right in the main, I was certainly wrong every other way. The question had reference to the direction of the Post at Lyons.

The Duke of Angoulême, misled by those about him, had so far exceeded the powers he had received for the south, as to dismiss the director of Lyons, a man of high capacity, very much respected by the public, and against whom the only reproach that could be directed was, that he had not withdrawn during the Hundred Days. He had been replaced by a person especially recommended by the zeal that he had displayed for the royal cause, but who had no other claim to be Director of Posts; and the present case was that of Lyons, the first directorship of the kingdom. The former holder claimed the restitution of his post, and I was inclined to favour his demand, while offering the place of inspector to the man who had for a time replaced him. In this way I thought I might reconcile the respect due to the selection of the Prince with the desire of the public and with justice.

The Duchess of Angoulême was of a different opinion, and could not imagime how any one could call in question a nomination of the Prince, her husband. She considered herself offended by it. On this matter I received a visit from the Duchess of Sévent, a lady of the highest estimation for her virtues and excellent disposition. I had known her when quite young, when the Baroness de Choiseul, her mother, lived at Saint Joseph; I had also been a fellow-student with her husband, a man of the greatest promise, who was miserably slain in La Vendée. Though the course of the Revolution had separated me from the Duchess of Sévent, I retained in my heart attachment and veneration for her. She came to find me, and spoke to me thus:—

"Why do you compromise yourself, time after time, with the Duchess of Angoulême? You go against your own feeling in opposing the daughter of Louis XVI. I do not come to ask you to sacrifice your duty—Heaven forbid; but there is a method of fulfilling it which may

be reconciled with all that is due to a princess in such a high position."

So far I justified my conduct to the best of my power, not forgetting the respect I owed to Madame de Sévent. We came then to the affair of the director at Lyons, and she pressed me not to insist on the course I had taken. I replied that my mind was perfectly made up on the subject.

"So," said Madame de Sévent, "you would inconsiderately run the risk of losing your office?"

This kind of menace threw me off my balance.

"Madame," I replied, "one of two persons must administer the Post-office, the Duchess of Angoulême or myself; if she is to appoint the directors, beginning with that of Lyons, I shall willingly give up the place to her."

"But, my dear sir, you do not consider, or I have expressed my ideas badly."

"Well or ill, I have the honour to reply to you that there is no administration possible, if princes meddle with it, and make selections forced on them by intrigue, instead of such as are recommended by justice and the public interest."

Madame de Sévent tried to soothe me; she persisted with all manner of grace and kindness. I closed the interview abruptly, and handed her out in ill-humour. This scene did not injure me, for this excellent woman could not injure anyone; she kept to herself all that could do me any injury, and forgave it at once; but I did not take advantage of the advice she gave me.

I had the happiness of trusting to the word of Louis XVIII., and looked on myself as in an impregnable fort in the Post-office. In my own opinion I had derogated considerably in accepting it, and could not think that anyone would ever think of turning me out of it. I did

not go to the Duchess of Angoulême; I did nothing to justify myself. I was very wrong.

I was also wrong, on my return, in neglecting to appear in the Pavilion Marsan. During our stay at Ghent, I was the one of the constitutional royalists most attentive to the Count d'Artois. I had, as I have said, received that prince on his return, and had been the confidant of his first delight; he had perceived the emotion I had myself felt. During the first fortnight of his stay in Paris, the pleasure of seeing him brought me to him as often as the cares of business allowed me; and princes are like pretty women—they always love a little those who love them. This kind of familiarity had become chilled afterwards in consequence of the different direction that the King and his brother desired to give the Government; but it was resumed at Ghent. The scene at Cambrai had not injured me in the mind of the King's brother, who told me, as we left the Council, that he laid the blame of the proclamation much less on the reader who had been so insolently pointed at, than on M. de Talleyrand, who had dictated it. On our return to Paris, I had no greater desire than to cultivate the good will of the Prince. I was attracted to him; but the division soon became marked between him and the Cabinet. I knew that the shafts lanced against the Ministers came from the Pavilion Marsan, and, from a feeling of delicacy, I avoided renewing my intimacy with Monsieur, which might have led to the belief that resentment had thrown me into his party. I had chilled the Prince by this kind of negligence, or rather he had been persuaded by others that I held myself aloof from constitutional stubborness, and was one of those men of principles that could not be counted on.

The fall of Talleyrand's Ministry was predicted, and

could not be long delayed. The great affair of the moment was the treaty with the foreigners, and they decidedly would have no more of Talleyrand. I heard this news from the King himself, who did me the favour to tell me.

"Just before you, I received my Ministers, and they gave in their resignations. They did it in English fashion; I received it in the same way. I am going to form a new Cabinet; tell me what effect that will have on the public. I regret M. Pasquier; why was he obliged to make common cause with the others? I suppose he was not wedded to their system."

I saw the King next day; I informed him of the effect produced by the resignation of Ministers on the Exchange, in the Palace of Justice, in the Deputies' Library, at M. Laffitte's salon, already a power. The King was satisfied with the agreement of this report with those which he had received from others, and asked me to suggest some names to him for Finance Minister, as that was the point on which there was some difficulty. In the evening I sent him a note containing the names of MM. Becquey, Corvetto, and De la Bouillerie, with a short biography of each, and it seemed that I had not made a bad choice, as two out of these three names were chosen, M. Corvetto for Minister, and M. de la Bouillerie as Under-Secretary of State. I learnt, however, that on the very day of the Ministers' resignation, it was discussed at the Pavillon Marsan, in the presence of the Monsieur, whether the Director-General of the Post Office ought not to retire with them, because, if not exactly a member of the Cabinet, he held a post which enabled him to exercise considerable influence. All were of that opinion. The Prince took neither side, but it was threatening me not to defend me. I learned at the same time that there were many around the

Duchess of Angoulême who openly expressed their joy that they should soon be rid of me. I persisted in my security, and it was increased by the confidential intercourse I had with the King. Two days went by. Hints came to me from more than one quarter. I was advised to speak to M. Decazes, whose influence was already becoming brilliant. M. Decazes told me a little anecdote that was not reassuring. In the King's cabinet, the composition of the new Ministry was under discussion, and inquiry was made, whether among the names that were balloted, there were any with capacity for public speaking. M. Decazes had been willing to reckon me as a talent gained. Monsieur made it pretty clear that no dependence was to be placed on this, and the King had kept silence. M. Decazes advised me to go straight to His Majesty, as he had reason to think the King was still well disposed towards me, and to come to an explanation. I did not like to do this, and I appreciated the reasons that might excuse me from taking such a step. I said to myself, if the King has kept silence, it certainly is because he did not desire that my connection with him should be suspected. How can he exclude me from public affairs, when he asks me in whom he may repose his confidence? Monsieur, who knows my opinions, and has often opposed them, certainly must have meant to say, that it might happen that a difference of opinion might occasionally occur between me and the new Ministry. However, that day, in preparing the daily bulletin for the King, I inserted, as a common report of the town, which had not affected me in the least, that there was a talk of a change in the Director-General of the Post Office. I sent my report. Next day the Chancellor waited on the King.

"Perhaps you will see Count Beugnot to-day; re-

assure him on the current reports. I am much pleased with him, and our agreement stands."

No doubt the King meant to speak of the promise that he had made me, to leave me at the Post Office in any succession of Ministry. The Chancellor came to me as he left the Tuileries, and congratulated me on being more secure than ever of my place; and I was delighted and proud that I had not followed the advice of M. Decazes, and had a laugh with the Chancellor, who likes a laugh, at the fright they meant to give me. Two days passed in negotiations for the formation of a new Cabinet. I heard that the King had some trouble in selecting a person for the Home Office, and that he was hesitating between MM. Vaublanc and D'Herbonville. I went to the Tuileries, in hopes that His Majesty would speak to me about it, and inclined to add a grain to the scale in favour of M. Vaublanc. I had long known his qualities and imperfections intimately, but still preferred him to his competitor. I approached the King, who received me with an appearance of embarrassment I had not observed in him before. His countenance was not open, and his eyes, so engaging when he pleased, would not meet mine. Though in doubt what to think of it, I went to business as usual. The King allowed me to speak, and seemed as if he had trouble in finding a reply. He several times made the gesture which betrays anxiety of mind in him, and then said to me, with his eyes fixed on his desk—

"Count Beugnot, in consideration of the conditions existing between myself and you, it is better that you should be informed by myself than by others,—what I have some difficulty in telling you,—that I have made other arrangements for your post."

I remained confounded, and the King, astonished at the sensation I experienced, added, "Besides, I have

given you a good recompense. Go to the Finance Minister."

When I had thanked the King for his past kindness, and uttered some expressions of devotion, I took my leave and directed my steps to the office of the Minister of Finance.

APPENDIX.

As has been seen in the latter part of these Memoirs, the period of Count Beugnot's stay in the Grand-duchy of Berg was six years, from 1807 to 1813. He used to say he considered these six years as the happiest of his life. His object was to diminish, as far as lay in his power, the severities of conquest in the country he had to administer. By a happy mixture of firmness and kindness, by knowing the right moment to take, even in the face of Napoleon's requirements, he managed to make the rule of the French liked by these gentle German populations, who were dazzled by the Emperor's genius. And so, when forced to return to France, after the disasters of the Russian campaign, the Governor of the Grand-duchy of Berg could justly say that he left regrets in the Grand-duchy, and that if all the servants of the Imperial power had then been animated by the same spirit of moderation and justice, perhaps in the hour of reverse, we might have found the populations less hostile and our allies less doubtful.

On the fall of the Empire, April 2, 1814, Count Beugnot was summoned by the Provisional Government to undertake the duties of the Home Department, but he required that his nomination should not be published in the *Moniteur* till after the official ratification of Napoleon's abdication. He retained that portfolio but a very short time, and the following month, on the 13th of May, he was appointed Director-General of the Police of the kingdom. Such was the modest name given to that

ministry, in order to efface the remembrance of Fouché's police as much as possible.

Thus in accepting the general direction of Police, with a certain repugnance, M. Beugnot did not conceal from himself the difficulties of his situation. It was indeed a difficult task to retain within bounds, in police matters, the requirements of the allies, and the resentments of the royalist party, exaggerated by their recent triumph. Yet M. Beugnot was able to be successful in this delicate part of his office, and all the time that he occupied the old office of Police, order and peace were maintained in the capital.

He presented a report to the King every day, which he took care to draw up himself, containing, along with the mention of important events, some respectful observations on the proceedings of Government. The King read these reports with interest, and sent them back to the Director-General of Police, often adding written remarks expressing his satisfaction.

During the earlier days of his exercising those functions, Louis XVIII. asked M. Beugnot to show him the list of pensions granted by the Emperor out of the funds of the police-office. He at once read the names inscribed on the list to the King, and came to the end of it.

"There is one name I can hardly venture to read to the King, as recalling so many painful remembrances."

"What is the name?"

"That of the sister of Robespierre."

"Leave it on the list; the name she bears is misery enough."

And for the whole of her life the sister of Robespierre continued to receive from the police fund a pension granted by the brother of Louis XVI.

Selected to be a member of the new Council of State, July 6, 1814, M. Beugnot in that capacity was, with MM. Montesquiou and Ferrand, one of the three Commissioners appointed by the King to speak in his name in the Commission that had to prepare the Charter. These memoirs contain valuable details about the pre-

paratory labours of the Commission. Indeed, among all the remembrances of his political life, Count Beugnot considered that it was one of the most precious favours with which he had been honoured, to have been one of those who laboured together in the foundation of a Constitutional Government in France by the publication of the Charter, which in the midst of vicissitudes, and under two different reigns, has however given our country long years of peace, prosperity, wise and true liberty.

The King found a faithful interpreter of his conciliating and moderate policy in the Director-General of Police. And so when the portfolio of the Marine became vacant by the death of Baron Malouet, M. Beugnot was selected for that ministry by the personal choice of the King, December 3, 1814.

It was in this quality of Minister of Marine Affairs that he followed Louis XVIII. to Ghent during the Hundred Days, March 20, 1815. But the Minister of the days of exile did not continue to hold office in those of happiness; on their return from Ghent, M. Beugnot was excluded from the Ministry by M. de Talleyrand, and appointed Director of the Post Office, July 9, 1815.

However, the King had not parted without regret from a Minister whose wit he liked, and whose enlightened devotion he appreciated; so to indemnify him for an unmerited disgrace he appointed him Member of the Privy Council with the title of Minister of State. September 19, 1815.

M. Beugnot was better formed for the exact and regular labours of administration than for political intrigues, and he had at last become accustomed to his new duties as Director-General of the Post Office, hoping to retain it for several years, and proposing to introduce during that time improvements long demanded. But the Director of the Post Office of the Restoration did not forget the firm attitude of the prefect of Rouen, protecting a subordinate against the severity of the First Consul, in refusing to give up letters entrusted to his care, and when there was an attempt to obtain from M. Beugnot

a measure that he considered contrary to his duty, he did not hesitate to encounter a disgrace that he foresaw. Coldness was not long in coming, and on the 7th of June, 1817, he was appointed Director-General of the *Caisse des Dépôts et des Consignations*, an office that he refused, to take up a more independent position, and devote himself entirely to the discussions in the Chambers.

Having been elected by the departments of the Higher Marne and Lower Seine, according to the custom that then allowed the deputies to represent two departments at once, M. Beugnot, for six consecutive sessions, was a member of nearly all the Committees on Finance, and often had to draw up the Budget. He had the honour, with the Abbé Louis, M. Corvetto, M. de Villèle, and M. Roy, to be returned among the group of devoted and sound administrators, who by wisely organised measures, by scrupulous respect for engagements which were only the sad consequence of our defeats, managed in a few years to efface the traces of the reverses caused by invasion, and raised the public credit of the Restoration so high.

M. Beugnot was concerned in the entrance of M. Corvetto on the Finance Ministry, and when that austere Minister, terrified at the burthen laid on him, and the violent attacks of the Opposition, wished to resign, M. Beugnot said to him in the sitting of May 15, 1816, "Men who have filled great posts must accustom themselves to endure censure; for blame, though undeserved, is a further proof of the public liberty."

But M. Beugnot did not give himself up exclusively to discussions of finance. M. Hyde de Neuville had laid on the table in the Chamber a proposition for the suspension of the irremovability of judges appointed during the year, till the completion of a year from their installation. During the sitting of November 20, 1815, M. Beugnot opposed this proposition with justice as nothing but a satisfaction given to the exaggerated fears of the Royalist party. He had no difficulty in demonstrating that this proposition was a manifest violation of

the Charter so recently promulgated, and bearing in the 58th article, "That the judges named by the King were irremovable."

He said, "The Charter shall never be a political gospel, where on the one hand pains may be taken to kill the spirit by the letter, and on the other, to save it from the letter by inductions drawn from the spirit. It was honestly given, it ought to be extended in a similar manner. If there is any office in society that ought, by being perpetual, to be placed above private hatreds and resentments, it is that which pronounces on the life, honour, and fortune of the citizens: judges reduced to await in their seats the loss or confirmation of their situation would be the worst kind of courtiers."

It is well known that this proposition of M. Hyde de Neuville was adopted by the Chamber of Deputies, but rejected by the Chamber of Peers, as an infringement of the Charter, and encroachment on the royal initiative.

On the 18th of December, 1815, M. Vaublanc, Minister of the Home Department, had presented a bill on the subject of elections. This project had been re-cast by M. de Villèle, the clerk of the Commission, and, being the work of the ultra-royalist majority of the Chamber, rather declared their views than the sincere expression of the views of the Government, was attacked by M. Beugnot as a first infringement of the promises of the Charter.

In the sitting of the 27th of February, 1816, he said—"The Cantonal Assembly would be composed, according to the Minister's project, of the sixty largest tax-payers of the Canton, and of a certain number of magistrates or public functionaries present by the right of their titles, without any property qualification being required. According to the report of the Commission, the same Assembly should be composed of the citizens domiciled within the Canton, and paying at least forty shillings in taxes. Both are contented with the age of twenty-five years.

"Neither one nor the other is derived from the Charter. Indeed, it would seem that both parties had

striven which could go farthest away. The Charter does not provide, does not even suppose, that the deputies would be elected by citizens paying fifty francs in taxes, and surely much less by the administrators of hospitals, wardens of colleges, and leading workmen, who pay no taxes at all. This is a serious deviation, dangerous and alarming, inasmuch as its tendency is to demoralise the spirit of government.

"No doubt provision may be made by law, for what the Charter did not declare, or ought not to have declared; but under this strict condition that these laws in detail be consequences, more or less direct, of the fundamental principles established by the Charter, and never oppose its positive directions.

"We are all desirous that the choice of the electors may be good. The Charter desired it before we did, and demanded that their franchise should be based on property, such property that instructs its owner, teaches him the existence of social morality, and attaches him to the welfare of the State, by the bonds that it creates and the counsels it gives.

"But in raising the number of members of the Chamber, I cannot admit that an indemnity should ever be given them. It is with a well-founded distrust that I differ in this point from the opinion just assented to by our illustrious colleague,* who seems destined to vindicate our modern times, by displaying an absolutely antique talent and virtue; but it seems to me that when comparing us in this point with Holland and the United States, he has not taken sufficiently into consideration the character that distinguishes and elevates the French nation. Holland, impressed with the stamp of commercial genius, accustomed to submit everything to arithmetic, has come to the opinion that a salary may be appended to the highest offices. The same opinion may have been carried into continental America, among a still new people, and retained in simplicity of manners by the peaceful labours of agriculture. It is not the same thing with a

* M. de Serre.

nation brought up and grown old in the feeling of honour, which is the parent of so many great actions, with a nation where, if the father has been ruined in the service of the State, the son never fails to replace him and be ruined again. Lastly, let us remember that with us the best actions are not performed for money, and that France and honour were always synonymous."

M. Beugnot spoke again in the discussion on the law that appropriated a sum of a million and three-quarters for the provision of the clergy and restored to them the woods that still made a part of the State domain. The moderate party saw with regret the promotion of a law that, with the amendments, infringed on the royal prerogative, and had the serious inconvenience of stimulating the apprehensions already excited in the purchasers of national property. The discussion was long and stormy.

M. Beugnot was, in conjunction with M. de Serre, the organ of the fears of the sincere friends of the Monarchy. He said in the sitting of the 26th of April, 1816—"Gentlemen, there is reasonable subject for hope for the friends of the Restoration, because, in the discussion occupying the Chambers, opinions are rather different than opposed, and that not a word has been spoken from the tribune, not inspired with respect for religion, respect for the evils it has suffered, and desire to repair them. Why must acerbity have found its place here, and disturb the development of conscience and talent?"

Then entering on the discussion of the law, the orator called the attention of the majority to the dangerous road they were embarking on, by substituting for a project emanating from the royal initiative that presented by the Commission; he showed that the old clergy, as they had existed before the Revolution, could not arise again, and that if there was any idea of re-establishing them, the first obstacle would be found in the Charter, since such a body would be irreconcilable with it. Far from refusing to the clergy what was necessary for their charities and for the display demanded of them, the

orator only required to know the amount of the sums required to settle this sacred obligation.

"We uphold that it should be placed, if necessary, at the head of the public expenses, even before the civil list. What more can be wanted? What is wanted to reassure the ministers of worship? What—the question is of temporalities, and the surety of the crown itself will not be enough for them? Holy maxims of our fathers, what has become of you?

"But, gentlemen, I conjure you by the interest of the State, by that of the clergy themselves, do not go too far. For I must not conceal it, independently of the political considerations that I have just put forward, the time is one of too much difficulty to adopt means of the nature of those demanded of you. See how critical is our position, and what management it requires. Is this a moment to add to the public debt, without consideration, more than a million and three-quarters of pounds annually? The great book is dangerously attractive, and seems always open for new expenses or sacrifices. I have already said, and I repeat in, to record annual payments is not to create them. The course of the funds is such as to tell you that the moment for moderation is come; and when we reflect that this course is the measure of our obligations abroad, and our credit at home, we may dread the mischief that might occur from a proposition made with most honourable views, and by men with the best intentions.

"In the question that is now occupying us, we must know how to be just and prudent at the same time. Let the funds required for the provision for the ministers at the altars be augmented; it is just. They are too useful to the State to be neglected by it, and, in the restoration of the legitimate authorities, it would be shameful to omit the most ancient and most salutary. But prudence forbids our going further. Let us have a dread of compromising even what is good by precipitancy, by forgetfulness of men and things around us, and especially by want of discernment in the choice of means."

These words were favourably received; the proposal failed before the resistance of the moderate minority of the Chamber, as they retired at the moment for voting, and so rendered the scrutiny void. A little while afterwards, this Chamber, which had gained from Louis XVIII. the nickname of the inscrutable,* was dissolved by the celebrated ordinance of the 5th of September.

Again elected by the Departments of the Higher Marne and the Lower Seine, M. Beugnot was, with MM. de Serre, Pasquier, Bellart, and Ravey, one of the five candidates submitted to the King for President of the Chamber. The King selected M. Pasquier, but M. Beugnot was elected Vice-President, with MM. Camille Jordan, Simeon, and Royer-Collard. These selections showed the liberal and wisely Conservative mind of the new majority. So, in his draught of the address in reply to the speech from the Crown, M. Beugnot, Secretary of the Commission, said,—

"Your Majesty places attachment to the Charter immediately after that due to religion. Sire, you have expressed the thought of the whole of France, for there is not a Frenchman who is not desirous of a wise liberty, the peaceable enjoyment of his condition, his rights, and property. It was with these feelings, and with profound gratitude that your ordinance of the 5th of September has been received, and the royal assurance that you add to it will be received, never to allow of any attack on the fundamental law of the State. There is the safety of France, as it is the limit of revolution."

From the beginning of its meeting the Chamber was taken up with a bill of M. Lainé, the Minister of the Home Department, on the law of elections. The most important provision of this bill was that which granted the privilege of being an elector to every Frenchman of the age of thirty years and paying 300 francs in taxes. This law, increasing the number of electors by more than a hundred and forty thousand, raised a violent opposition in the ultra-royalist party, and even consider-

* Introuvable.

able anxiety in the friends of the Ministry. The remembrance of the Revolution was still too fresh for the addition of such a large proportion of the middle classes to the number of those who enjoyed the franchise, not to be looked on with fear. In his speech of the 28th of December, 1816, M. Beugnot endeavoured to calm the fears of the Royalists and raise the somewhat abated courage of the defenders of the bill. He said:—

"If the Charter were no more than a political gospel, the field for dispute would be vast. Every one might interpret it according to the discretion of his sect; some would kill the spirit by the letter, the others would save themselves from the letter by inductions drawn from their own spirit. But, take care; the Charter is not a thesis abandoned to the chances of our quibbles. It is a concession of political rights, limited by its nature to the rights that it concedes. Now in one extreme, as in the other, whether the question be of the largest tax-payers in a department, or of those who pay the smallest amount, neither one nor the other can receive a political right not created by the Charter.

"For a length of time the profession of arms was forbidden to the middle class. Now this class is inscribed in the foremost lines of the annals of military glory; even peace does not take away their arms; they it is who watch day and night over the security of our streets and preservation of our property, with a courage and generosity unexampled in the annals of any people; lastly, I must say that it is they who preserve the tradition of our ancient manners, the respect for holy things, love for their kings, ancient probity, and I see nothing in them to invite distrust or give cause for disdain.

"But let there be no self-deception; they are no longer the burgesses so little considered. They have been emancipated by their wealth, light, and power, and this emancipation has been hallowed by the Charter, because it had been before by the irresistible spirit of the age. Such is the character of the law proposed to you. It makes the nation enter into the Monarchy, and secures

to it all the advantages of this form of Government. The Revolution only broke forth in 1789 because the Monarchy had long been non-existent; and what had shaken it if not the assembly of the great men of the State summoned from all parts of the kingdom to counsel and confirm the Monarchy, and only able to insult it, or to engage it in intrigue? What completed the work of the notables, but the Parliaments, who, not contented with having usurped a portion of the legislative power from the nation, still aspired to share the Government with the King? Who dictated those insulting remonstrances? Whence arose the seditious deputations that bore their menaces to the Palace of Versailles with no shade of Louis XIV. to defend it? Was it the middle class that furnished these notables, these Parliaments, these deputies, these revolted courtiers? It is true that when the aristocracy had broken the road, the democracy, in turn, made their way into the social edifice, and introduced its torches, its daggers, and executioners; but who were the first to blame?—history will tell. Impartial history will draw the middle class of society a prey to the excesses of both the others, always unhappy, always submissive, always useful, always despised, until at last restored to its place by a Monarch as just as enlightened, it has returned to him in love and strength what has been received from him in power and consideration."

This law has received from history the name of the law of elections of February the 5th, and was passed in both Chambers by a slight majority.

It was especially in the discussion of the proposed law for the press that M. Beugnot gave a real proof of an incontestable talent for oratory, and of the firmness of his liberal opinions. On the 7th of December, 1817, the Ministry had presented to the Chamber of Deputies a proposal for a law for the repression of abuses of the liberty of the press. This proposal, softening the existing legislation on many points, did not appear to M. Beugnot to realise the promises of the Charter with sufficient com-

pleteness. In this discussion, which cast so much renown on the political public speaking of the Restoration, he experienced the pain of being obliged to separate from such of his friends as generally supported the Ministry, and made the Government listen to councils that breathed the most sincere attachment to the Monarchy and real interests of the country.

"Why must a question resolved by the Charter of the Constitution, be renewed every day within these walls, and daily agitated before the courts of law? Who would wish to raise a doubt, whether the fundamental law of the realm should be observed? And whatever be the seriousness of abuses of the press, is there any that can equal the danger of, I will not say violating the public faith, but leaving it uncertain.

"The proposed law presented to the Chamber, is certainly another step in the direction of the liberty of the press; it puts us on the road, and I shall support it in many parts. But let us consider whether the time is not arrived to suppress all circuitous courses, and reach the goal by the shortest road.

"Our innumerable discussions on this point have resulted in two points consecrated by the fundamental law.

"The first lies in the positive right possessed by all Frenchmen, to print and publish their opinions, on all subjects, certainly without excepting those most nearly bearing on their liberty, their property, and dearest interests. Whatever be the extent or form of writing, no preliminary examination, no censure, no obstacle should arrest or suspend the publication. The Charter allows no distinctions, and consequently does not allow any to be supposed. Otherwise it must be averred that it immediately destroys the right it has proclaimed, and by a most ridiculous interpretation maintain that it meant that opinions might be printed and published every time that they were not prevented.

"As a second result, it has been recognised that it was possible and not unusual to abuse the liberty of writing, as

well as that of speaking and acting; so the Charter says that the laws ought to repress these abuses; that is to say, that they should in this matter, as in any other, define and punish transgressions, faults, and crimes.

"There are not yet, though indeed it may have been thought of, any general directors of watch-making, haberdashery, and other branches of industry. By what fatality are those most nearly connected with the thought of man, with his most noble and active faculties, subjected to a crowd of officials, always disposed by their habits and interest to constrain them? Let us say it to the depositaries of power, for they are worthy to hear it—the league of men who live by the servitude of the press is an almost insurmountable obstacle to its liberty. Their presence around the authorities explains why the constitutional Charter finds so many obstacles in giving to the French the right of printing and publishing their opinions. Especially it is not possible, after thirty years of troubles, to have so slight an experience of human affairs, to hope that all these stages of superintendence can exist by the side of liberty, without crushing it sooner or later.

"Such is the influence of power on those who exercise it, and the disposition it excites in the most moderate among them, that they are always inclined to forbid to writers the examination of legislation and actual administration. They willingly allow themselves to be persuaded that this examination is in their domain, and that it appertains to them to direct, through themselves or their subordinates, all moral and political science, all historical and literary labours. We have with our own eyes seen this disposition degenerate, like all others, into a violent despotism.

"But let us take care; in any country where, in order to restrict the abuses of the press, may be employed the vague terms of *hurtful writings*, *dangerous or unbecoming*, *or putting forward false doctrine*, this language will be enough to make liberty impossible. The right of printing opinions does not exist, if it does not extend to the right

of even publishing those that are erroneous. It will soon be declared that an erroneous opinion is dangerous, for any error has some danger. But if we have reflected ever so little on the nature of the human mind, and social order, we must rest convinced that any kind of authority which pretends to discern the true and false in doctrine, the useful and the hurtful, will, by that very action declare itself despotic, in all kinds of instruction, towards such progress as it will not itself make.

"Our elders in liberty ceaselessly blame us for not professing any universal belief, for not having, like them, fixed points around which all may rally without distinction of party. Let us endeavour to give them the lie, by proving that we have points on which we are already quite agreed; the safety of person and property, liberty of conscience, liberty of the press, these are the four sureties for which all the points of the Charter exist, with its organisation and distribution.

"It is especially in these four points that it must remain inviolate. We may make variations in the application of these principles themselves, never in fidelity and gratitude to him who has consecrated them.

"And are the dangers of the liberty of the press so great at this time? Why should Ministers who have nothing to fear from public opinion desire to stifle the expression of it? And if they could fear anything from it, why should we deprive the King of his only means of hearing the truth? What right have we to renounce one of his most marked benefits? And what writer, what Frenchman, could now speak of the most virtuous of Monarchs without being repulsed by the conscience of the entire world? Under such a Prince men should be allowed to think what they like, and say what they think; under him it is that those laws of emergency may be dispensed with that only serve to renew political questions without cessation, that it is dangerous to agitate again, when the fundamental law has decided them. The liberty of printing and publishing opinions would have long ago produced immense advantages, if instead of

trying to forestall the abuses inseparable from it, attempts at repression had been made; that is to say, if frequent misdemeanours, and infrequent crimes that might have arisen, had been punished regularly and constitutionally. Ah, let us never forget that power places itself in danger when it wishes to withdraw rights once granted."

The effect of this discussion on the press, which was then stirring up public opinion to a great extent, was to produce for the next session a partial remodelling of the Cabinet. Several Ministers retired, and the Duke de Felto was replaced at the War Office by Marshal Gourion Saint Cyr. On the 29th of November, 1817, the new Minister produced to the Chamber a proposal of a law for the reorganisation of the army. This proposal, arising from the Marshal's inventive genius, placed the recruiting of the army on a new basis, created a reserve, and for the first time laid down invariable rules for promotion. M. Beugnot was one of the most ardent supporters of the new law, that seemed to him, especially in the creation of the reserve, a pledge of peace and security for France and Europe. On the 22nd of January, 1818, he made a long and important speech that was much noticed, and in which he displayed much eloquence, for the defence of the old soldiers of the Empire against unjust suspicions.

"Gentlemen, it seems we have heard, not exactly in this Chamber, not with the solemnity of the tribune, but yet with the kind of rumour requiring an answer, that the confidence reposed by the King and the country in the veterans of the army may be blind and dangerous. France is quiet; peace exists abroad also; it is only in a happily unlikely contingency that we might have to have recourse to the arms of our old soldiers. It is to save the country by a momentary effort that this succour should be claimed. Well, all this has caused uneasiness to arise and to be expressed.

"Of all mistrust, none could be more unfortunate, or would more readily penetrate into the heart of the nation, than that which might pursue the veterans of our army

in their repose and resignation. But lately their glory was not felt, the sound of their distant victories had no patriotic echo here. These victories served to rivet our fetters; these successes only presaged war and the misery of families. But as the King has come to assuage the misery of France by justice and liberty, our hearts may move for these remembrances of glory and for these noble warriors who have acquired a grandeur for the name of France that reverses could not take away. They are there like monuments of a past age, and share in the respect owed to whatever is no longer. Do not you see that the people love them? They hold them in their hearts. When some picture in the King's palace, or some print in the street, represents either their glorious adventures or heroic sufferings, have not you seen the crowd eagerly pressing round, and deeply feeling such reminders." Too proud to express his feelings in words, every good citizen knows how to read the response by sympathy in the eyes of Frenchmen. And it is these soldiers who are to be pursued by eternal distrust; on their forehead, with its noble scars, that the seal of infamy is for ever to be impressed! But when we talk of them, we yield to a feeling that has found no one to oppose it in these walls; no voice has been raised in this tribune that has not been prompted by the need of honouring such recollections. Soon, without doubt, the same good feeling will become more complete and general. And, indeed, these men are so eminently national, that to sound them is not only an injustice but a crime.

"I find, to resume, that the project laid before you tends to give to France an army proper for defence rather than conquest, invincible within the boundary of its frontiers, and by that very fact indisposed to cross them, and that an army so constituted offers a double pledge of peace to France and Europe."

This law, which has the name of the illustrious Marshal its author still appended to it, was passed in the Chamber by a very large majority, though stoutly opposed by the ultra-royalist party.

When, at the end of 1818, the Ministry, under the leadership of General Dessoles, succeeded to the administration of the Duke de Richelieu, the party of the extreme Right in the two Chambers saw with uneasiness the accession of men to power, known for their sincere attachment to the new institutions. The majority of the Chamber of Peers, especially, saw with regret the formation of a Ministry which indicated, on the part of the Crown, its firm intention to continue that liberal system of politics which had followed the dissolution of the Chamber of 1815, and prepared the Electoral Law of the 5th February. Thus, in the sitting on the 20th of February, 1819, the Marquis Barthélemy presented to the Chamber of Peers a resolution tending to subject the organisation of electoral colleges to such modifications as should appear indispensable. After being passed by the higher Chamber, the resolution was brought to the Chamber of Deputies, and they appointed a special commission, whose report was presented by M. Beugnot in a close committee of the 16th of March, 1819. He did not hesitate to supplicate the Chamber to reject a proposal containing serious hidden dangers, causing uneasiness in the country, and especially a roundabout means of stopping the Government in the liberal direction of its march.

"The law of elections is dear to the nation; it is near its heart, and cannot be touched without danger. Public opinion places it on the same level as the Charter, because there is no person who does not feel that the one is the accomplishment and strongest pledge of the other. As a pledge of the Charter, the law of elections shuts the door on the past. So when an attack upon it is perceived, all the institutions resting on the same principles are believed to be menaced at the same time; in short, it is believed that the past is again put in question; and thence arises the uneasiness of mind.

"Thus, gentlemen, has it been proved to us that the proposition adopted by the Chamber of Peers concealed a very different effect than what was naturally expressed;

that considered as an attack on the law of elections without motive or even pretext.

"It has been no less clearly proved to us, that this proposition, considered under this aspect, involved dangers of more than one kind, and your Commission came to the conclusion that you could not make too much haste to prove the victory of the law of elections in the combat forced on it.

"Moments here all have their value; let the Chamber attend to the strong manifestation of public opinion and firmly give its decision. Then agitation will be quieted, the national institutions will triumph. These alone are Monarchical, because they alone can warrant the stability of the throne and repose of the people. Your Commission reports that the proposition should be rejected."

The conclusions of the report were adopted by the Chamber, and the proposition rejected.

During the following sessions M. Beugnot took only a small share in the parliamentary debates. On the 30th of April, 1821, he was raised to the dignity of Grand Cross of the Legion of Honour; and when the Chamber was dissolved in 1823, he did not again offer himself to the choice of the electors, and desired to retire for the time from political life.

It was because he was expecting the effect of the King's particular goodwill. On the 12th of March, 1819, a royal ordinance, countersigned by the Marquis Dessoles, President of the Council, summoned Count Beugnot to the Chamber of Peers; but the very day that he received notice of his nomination the Ministry resigned, leaving in charge to their successors to do honour to the King's signature; the *Moniteur* did not publish the ordinance, and he was not put in possession of his seat in the Chamber of Peers till ten years later, on the 27th of January, 1830.

But in this interval of ten years, though he had voluntarily retired from the Chamber of Deputies, Count Beugnot retained the whole time of the Restoration an amount of political influence that even Louis XVIII. and Charles X. deigned to appreciate.

It was homage to his great experience in business, his firm and clear understanding, his devotion to Monarchical principles, combined with a sincere and thoughtful attachment to the political liberty granted by the Charter.

But he was not permitted long to enjoy the dignity of the peerage that he had seemed to desire as the legitimate crown of a life so honourably spent. His liberal and monarchical convictions received a rude shock from the ordinances of 1830, and the consequent events, and he returned to private life under the Government of July. Then he retired to his house at Bagneux, near Paris, and undertook the collection and completion of these memoirs, having composed many fragments during former years. But cruel sufferings did not permit him to complete his task, and Count Beugnot died on the 24th of June, 1835, at the age of seventy-three, after having received the last consolations of religion from the hands of the venerable Archbishop of Paris, Monseigneur de Quélen.

THE END.

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